

THE *4414 Bb-20*

MESSIAH.

IN

NINE BOOKS.

BY

JOHN CAMERON.



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T H E P R E F A C E.

THE following work was composed with a design, to amuse and instruct : the amusement arises chiefly, from a relation of transactions truly marvellous and interesting ; many of these are undoubted facts, supported by the strongest evidence ; others are only fictitious, yet probable, and very consistent with the former ; the real facts are drawn from the sacred history, the fictitious are invented from short hints therein also contained. The instructions are chiefly of a religious and moral kind, they are delivered not directly as from the Author ; but by a variety of persons of different characters, introduced upon various occasions : these persons are selected from the various orders of intelligent beings, of which we

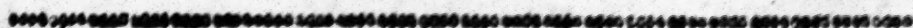
have any knowledge, namely, God, Angels, men, and devils.

The discourses and actions of these persons, are expressive of their different characters, and adapted to the particular occasions upon which they are introduced. Almost every thing said or done, has a relation to the principal character, *viz.* the Messiah, whose birth, life, doctrines, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension, are attempted to be set in a plain, rational, useful and interesting light. The intention of the whole is, to make good impressions upon the mind, and promote the interests of virtue and religion in the world. Whether it is properly calculated for that end, every one who reads it must judge for himself.





THE
MESSIAH.



BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

Immediately after the resurrection of Lazarus, Satan assembles the principalities of his empire upon mount Hermon ; relates briefly his various successs, disappointments and fears, especially from the certain appearance of the Messiah ; demands advice ; different schemes proposed by Belial, Abaddon, Molach, and Mammon ; their final resolution.

LONG had Satan, beheld with envy, malice and terror, the amazing success of the Messiah ; every day his fears increased, in proportion to the growing danger, which threatened the total destruction of his kingdom ; at last,

with the greatest expedition, and in the utmost perplexity, he assembles upon mount Hermon the principal ministers of his empire. Like a blasted cedar upon Lebanon he stands erect amidst the apostate angels, grief, indignation, and terror struggled in his guilty mind. His expressive looks commanded attention ; an awful silence held them mute ; not a whisper, not a breath was heard, while the rebellious arch-angel thus began.

O ye thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, attend with patience, while I relate those events, which now, more than ever demand your serious consideration. Ye may well remember the obscure threatening denounced in Paradise, “ the seed of the woman shall bruise thy head”. The birth of Cain gave us no small uneasiness, till we found by experience that our fears were vain. From that time till the flood of Noah, our apprehensions of danger were almost forgot ; nothing it seems but a universal deluge could defeat our conquests, and divest us of that empire we had gained over the human race. Soon after that, we recovered our dominion over the descendants of Noah, insomuch, that to each of you I appointed distinct kingdoms and principalities. Over these ye were acknowledged as gods, and worshipped with various rites, according to your desires : It is needless to mention all the dominions I assign’d you, I have divided among you the nations of the world for an inheritance ; not one of all these has opposed our authority,

authority, but the base, the detested kingdom of Judah. There indeed we frequently gained a settlement, but could never hold it long ; this is the only contemptible spot of earth, where our enemy is acknowledged as sovereign ; even in this place we have many friends, who, while they profess subjection to him, are nevertheless our faithful servants. We have now obtained by repeated efforts, not only the dominion of their hearts, but also the possession of their bodies ; we can now amuse ourselves, with their distracted imaginations, their disordered senses, and excruciating pains. In short, after all the attempts made by our enemy to erect his kingdom upon the ruin of ours, yet we have so far succeeded as to gain an universal empire, “ for all the kingdoms of the world are mine, and to whomsoever I will I give them”.

How often have we been alarmed in the midst of prosperity ? How dreadful was that voice from heaven, which once I heard, while in my reptile form I lay concealed, on one of the mountains of Moriah ? It was directed to Abraham in these words “ in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed ” this seemed to be the ancient threatening again renewed, and imported no less than a total revolt from our authority. Accordingly we soon beheld a nation formed in the land of Ham and the most dreadful calamities inflicted upon our subjects there ; our best friends perished in the red sea, and Canaan itself became a prey to our enemies. I need

not mention the repeated efforts, made upon various occasions to expel the detested race ; at length by unwearied toil and assiduity we gained ten of their tribes ; and I expected to have gained a conquest over the other two, when Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah joined in confederacy against them ; but the expedition failed ; then were my ancient fears again revived, for while I entered Jerusalem in the form of a raven, I observed the prophet Isaiah conversing with Ahaz, and heard him pronounce the following words “ the Lord
“ himself shall give you a sign, behold a virgin
“ shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call
“ his name Immanuel” the son of a virgin must certainly be the seed of the woman. Whatever apprehensions of danger were occasioned from these words, yet a long series of prosperous events, had almost entirely removed them, especially when I beheld their city and temple utterly destroyed, and their nation led captive, into the very centre of our dominions. There I expected to have obtained a total victory over them, but to my great disappointment, I found they had contracted a greater aversion to our divinities than ever. Upon their restoration to their native country, which you know gave us all so much pain, the same threatening was again renewed by the last of their prophets, in these words “ the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly
“ come to his temple, even the angel of the covenant, whom ye delight in”. The same threatening

threatning of vengeance has run through every age ; we have been tortured with fears, elevated with vain hopes, and blasted with frequent disappointments, yet after all, had not Michael the arch-angel stood up in the defence of that nation, our most zealous and faithful servant Antiochus had certainly crowned our expectations with the greatest success. It is near five hundred years since their return from Babylon, and during all that time, we have never been able, either by terrors or allurements ; to draw them aside from a professed subjection to our grand adversary. The state of our kingdom is now in greater danger than ever. Some of you may be insensible perhaps of our present situation.

Hear then, O ye foreign princes, so far removed from the dangerous scene, ye rulers of the distant world, and all ye powers who lead the savage tribes in blind obedience to our will, from the eastern boundaries of China and Japan to the western British Isles, and from the sultry coast of Angola to the frozen Scythian hills, hear, while I relate to you things unknown, and full of dread.

Not many years ago, the horrid din of war ceased through the earth, and peace prevailed through a great part of our dominions ; this profound calm was only a sad omen of the approaching storm which soon began. For suddenly a star appeared in heaven, this was known by certain philosophers in the east, to be the sign of a mighty prince being born in Judea. Conduct-

ed by its gentle rays they left their native country, and arrived in Jerusalem, enquiring for the new born king : this alarmed the city, the prophets were consulted, and it was found, that the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem. This brought to my remembrance the words of Balaam, " there shall come a star out of Jacob, " and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel". Immediately I hastened to Bethlehem. There I saw a tender Infant inclosed in the gentle embraces of an affectionate and blooming mother, never did I behold a child so lovely, so divine ; a sweet serenity, a mild benevolence, a godlike majesty were strongly expressed in every feature. An awful respect, a profound veneration and love irresistible, stole suddenly into my heart, and for a moment possessed my soul : but a little reflection soon brought me to my self again. My fears arose, I hated the lovely infant, and the tender mother : I fled from the detested place, my servant Herod I confirmed in his jealousy, and roused all the terrors of his soul, disappointed by the philosophers and ignorant of his supposed rival, he readily complied with my designs ; the ministers of his vengeance are sent forth, and all the children of Bethlehem, and the adjacent country immediately put to death. From that day forth I supposed all danger from him was at an end, I judged him slain among the infant tribe.

Often times did I search, but never found him till thirty years expired, at last, while I stood by the river Jordan, where the multitude
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were baptized by John, there I beheld him coming up out of the water, and heard a voice from heaven saying, "this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased", never did envy, dread, and malice, rage with so much fury within my soul, since the fatal day, when with the vengeful thunder of his Almighty Father, he drove us headlong over the battlements of heaven, into the hissing flames of the infernal deep. Our destruction, said I, is now at hand, the seed of the woman appears at last, the enraged fury of heaven's everlasting king, is now disguised in the habit of frail mortality. From the time of his baptism, I watched him with a careful eye. He retired into the lonely wilderness for prayer and contemplation. There he lived forty days, like Moses on the cloudy top of mount Sinai, without any food. The wild beasts of the desert forgetting their native fierceness crept gently by him, nor did the hungry lion with hideous roar distend his foaming jaws when he approach'd. Like the kind domestic animals, sometimes they fawn'd and lick'd his feet; sometimes they sported and play'd around him, as once we saw them do in the flowery fields of Eden. At length hungry and almost faint, he wandered through the rocks, and prickly briars, and branching woods, sometimes in the gloomy shade, and sometimes in the open light, in search of acorns, herbs, or roots, but none he found. I then approach'd him as a wandering shepherd; I meant to try his temper, as once I tried the first parents of the human race, and

and found them weak. O son of God, said I, for you seem to be the person I lately beheld on the banks of Jordan, and honoured with that name by a voice from heaven, what do you mean by retiring from society, and dwelling with the wild beasts of the desert? here you must perish, for nature finds no sustenance in these lonely wilds; I see you quite exhausted with hunger, and unless you convert these stones into bread, by a miracle, you must certainly die, before you can reach the habitations of men, or find any supply. By this I intended, that he should distrust the providence of his Father. But soon did he perceive my design, and told me, that human life is not preserved by bread alone, but by the power of God, who can support the human body when he pleases without it, or can provide food in a manner quite extraordinary. I then retired, and scarce had I gone a little distance, when I saw the truth of what he said, for immediately a band of angels appeared to him, and refreshed him with heavenly food. Soon after this I placed him on the battlements of the temple; there he stood for some time, beholding the various landscape of hills, and vallies, and fertile fields, and winding streams, and gardens, and stately palaces. Now son of God, said I, throw thy self down from hence, trust in thy Father, fear no harm, for thus he hath promised to preserve thee “ he
“ will give his angels charge concerning thee,
“ and in their hands shall they bear thee up,
“ least at any time thou dash thy foot against a
“ stone”,

“stone”, here also he discovered my intention, and thus replied, we ought to rely upon God in present dangers, but we must not wilfully throw our selves into danger, on purpose to tempt his power or goodness, to work a miracle for our preservation. Having failed in these attempts, I resolved to make one trial more. Accordingly I carried him up unto an exceeding high mountain, and at once made to him a representation of all the kingdoms of the world, in their greatest pomp and glory. Behold, O son of God, said I, here is an object worthy of your choice, I know they are all design’d for you, they are mine at present ; but I freely give them up, if you will only bend the knee, and thank me for the generous gift. Scarce had I spoken, when with scornful indignation he replied, begone Satan, tempt me no more, for it is written “thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve”. Quick as the lightning I disappeared, for I could no longer endure his piercing looks ; I found him beyond the reach of every temptation, unshaken as the deep rooted hills before the gentle breeze of the morning.

From that time forth he appeared as a prophet, travelling with unwearied labour through Galilee, and Judea, preaching repentance and remission of sins, in all their cities and villages, in every synagogue and in the temple ; enforcing his doctrine with this argument, that the kingdom of heaven or the dispensation of the Messiah is at hand. His instructions are all confirm-
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ed by a variety of miracles of the most extraordinary kind: If he commands the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak; in a moment it is done. A word of his mouth; or a touch of his hand instantly cools the burning fever, or restores the withered limbs to their wonted strength and activity. The bloated hydrops, shaking palsy, and moon-struck madness, yea all diseases fly at his approach, and blooming health attends his steps. Our power is gone, nor dare we torture whom he wills to save. Even the dark and lonely regions of the dead are within his power. This very morning he raised to life, in the presence of many spectators Lazarus of Bethany, who expired four days ago, and lay confin'd within the grave. The listening crowds behold the triumphs of his power, and all his doctrines are heard with a pleasing admiration. His design in brief is this, to destroy our kingdom, and on its ruins to establish his own. Should he prevail, what must we expect? Nothing else than a speedy exile from the earth, and a close confinement in the dark abyss, where a doleful region of woe, and prison of horrible despair, shall again receive us, the blasted and miserable victims of insatiable and eternal vengeance. Upon the most urgent and threatening occasion you see, I have conven'd this assembly. Never was the interest of our empire, and the safety of our persons in greater danger than at present; now is the time for our united wisdom to exert itself, to the utmost degree of possibility;
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rack your invention, speak freely whatever seems best to be done, either in our own defence, or for the confusion of our adversaries; there are thoughts brooding in my mind; but as they are not fully matured, I shall wait till I hear your various consultations.

With these words Satan concluded. His dejected eyes dropt tears of unutterable distress, while throbbing anguish wrung his troubled heart. A dreadful horror sat on every countenance, a deep and deadly groan burst from the whole assembly like distant thunder growling in the sky. Mount Hermon trembled at the awful sound, and the foundations of Syron felt the shock; the lions in terror started from their dens, and the leopards fled along the hills, like frightened lambs before the prowling wolves of the desert.

Depressed with unutterable woe, they sat for some time in silent expectation, 'till Belial arose, Belial the apostate angel who holds the effeminate sons of pleasure in the soft tenacious bonds of sensual delight, seduc'd by him, they spend their days in gay amusements; the varied dance, the sweet harmonious sound, the sparkling bowl, and dark defil'd embrace, enormous riot and thoughtless dissipation with never ending toyl consume their wretched lives. Ghastly and pale the licentious demon arose from his seat, with a fearful aspect and trembling joints, like his deluded sons when sudden death stares them in the face.

Thrice

Thrice he attempted to speak, but dread and sorrow seal'd his lips; at length he said.

O sovereign prince of heavenly powers, chief ruler of this great terraqueous globe, our common danger is great beyond dispute, perhaps beyond description, no language can express the terrors I feel, nor can I ever forget the time, when in the burning deep we sought a sad retreat from the insufferable vengeance of our almighty foe. The fearful denunciation has indeed run through every age, "the seed of the woman shall bruise thy head;" these words are big with eternal fury and destruction to all our host; our enemy will never repent of his designs, nor yet can we repent, for we delight in all we do; as soon shall light and darkness be reconciled as he and we. It is impossible to resist his thundering power, it is intolerable to suffer his burning indignation, and therefore all we can do at present is only to try if we can by any means suspend his wrath, "and put far off the evil day." This I account worthy of all our pains, could we possibly gain it. Hear then what I propose. Jesus of Nazareth is doubtless the son of God, the Messiah promised to the Jewish nation, in all his outward circumstances he appears like a man of the lowest rank, distinguished from the crowd, only by spotless innocence and heavenly power, an extraordinary prophet raised up like Moses to instruct the chosen seed of Abraham, for I understand that his commission extends no further than to that people only. Now what if we should
perswade

perswade the Jews to receive him, and yield a ready submission to his authority? Be not surprised, the end will justify the means. If we perswade the Jews to give him a kind reception, as the son of God and the long expected Messiah, this may for a time suspend the wrath of heaven, this may gain a reprieve, 'till after days and unexpected events, may afford some hope of better success. A truce from war is sometimes made with prudent foresight of obtaining greater advantages over the enemy. Let us now suppose him chosen by the unanimous consent of the nation for their king, what can we lose by this? No part of our dominions, I am sure, for they disclaim our authority, at least in words, and never at any time were long our subjects. But see how much we gain by it, should they cheerfully receive him, this one event would confound all the prophets and prove them liars; for they have all with one consent foretold that the Messiah, "would be despised and rejected of men, cut off from the land of the living and brought unto the dust of death." He knows these predictions, and accordingly has foretold that he shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Now it is impossible he can be the true Messiah unless these things be accomplished; and therefore could we by any means perswade the Jews to receive him, then he, and all the prophets would be deceived, and all their vain prescience end in public fraud. This sure must be desirable. Not that I love the Jews, nor yet
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the Messiah, our determin'd and implacable foe; I hate them both, and with the greatest pleasure could I behold his sufferings, triumph in his death, and in their destruction. The multitude we see are strongly attached to his interest, they are well disposed to receive him as their king; the chief priests, the elders and great men of the nation despise him for his meanness: But these persons are our most faithful servants; we can bend their inclinations which way we please. Let us therefore unite our influence, and by all the arguments we can suggest persuade them to make choice of this man for their king. They all expect a wordly prince, so let him be; for though he should reign in Judea, our authority over the nations may remain as strong as ever. Should we succeed in this attempt, then all the prophets shall be liars, and he himself a deceiver. You have my advice, but if any can propose a better I shall hear it with the greatest satisfaction.

Scarce had he ended when Abaddon rose; a horrible frown sat upon his countenance, strongly expressive of inward trouble and raging discontent. Oftentimes he rides on the whirlwind with sounding wings, over hills and plains, and o'er the raging deep, the towering cedars fall at his approach, and the oaks of Bashan groan beneath his steps. From lowring clouds he often darts in fire, and roars tremendous through the darken'd sky; while fear, and death, and desolation mark his horrid paths. With furious

rious looks, and vengeful heart, and thundering voice, he thus began.

Ye mighty gods and rulers of this lower world, the most complicated danger, and intricate perplexity must certainly attend our present situation, when a base submission, and timed compliance with the designs of our hated enemies, have been so warmly recommended in this assembly. Not that I have any suspicion of the great fidelity and fervent zeal of Belial for our common interest. Of this I am fully satisfied, nevertheless the best intentions, the most laudable and publick spirited designs often fail of success, through the application of foolish and improper means. The mind is apt to be confounded by excessive fear, and wisdom flies away when terror mounts the throne, where fortitude should dwell. Let us avoid all mistakes of that kind. I should indeed rejoice to see the purposes of our enemies defeated, to see the words of the Messiah disappointed, and the ancient prophecies entirely frustrated. All this indeed might happen, would he accept of a worldly kingdom; but that I am sure he never will. Have ye not heard already, how on the mountains airy top, he scorn'd the gift of all our empire; and least any should imagine that his denial, proceeded from personal malice against our sovereign prince, or a contempt of the terms upon which it was offered: I myself observed him once in the barren desert, after he had fed a great multitude with a few loaves and small fishes, absolutely refuse the government of
his

his native country when they were about to compel him to accept of it. I saw him retire into a lonely place in order to avoid their importunity. It is true he loves to rule over men, but then it is over their hearts, their wills and affections; by the power of truth, and by the charms of virtue bringing them into subjection to the laws of God; all other power than this over men he utterly disclaims. Shall we be his servants? Shall we support his interest, by telling the world that this is the Son of God, the long expected Messiah? No, if some of us have done it already, either out of fear, or with a design to blast his ministry, it is neither prudent nor safe to do it any more; and you know we are absolutely prohibited under the pain of his immediate displeasure. But even supposing there were no danger in it, why should we confess his power, and publish his title to the Jewish nation? with a design we are told, that they may choose him for their king. Let us then suppose him seated on the throne of his ancestors, by the unanimous consent of high and low, how great must be our loss in such a case? We lose the affections of all who submit to him, and besides this, can we imagine his authority will extend no further? Will he suffer us peaceably to reign over all the world besides, or can we suppose him indifferent about all other nations, and limiting his affections within the narrow circle of his own countrymen? No, his designs are far more extensive. Have not the prophets said, "that in him all the nations of
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“ the earth shall be blessed, that he shall be for
“ a light unto the Gentiles, and for salvation to
“ the ends of the earth; that he shall speak
“ peace unto the heathen, that his dominion
“ shall be from sea to sea, and from the river
“ to the ends of the earth.” These are the de-
crees of heaven, the designs of God and his
Anointed, if these should be accomplished the
ruin of our kingdom is inevitable. Our business
then is, to invent and put in execution, every
possible method to prevent the impending danger.
This must be done by some bold and daring ef-
fort, by sudden violence, and not by the arts of
slow deceit, and mean compliance. His death
is decreed, be it so, it is better for us I think
that he should die, than live and reign for ever.
But die he shall not, as the prophets have fore-
told, by the hands of men, in mild obedience to
his father’s will, and with kind affection to them
who shed his blood; there all the merit lies. A
death sudden, unexpected, and almost without
pain, a death which allows no time for reflection,
or any room for patience, resignation to the di-
vine will, or meekness towards men; such a
death merits no reward, it has no virtue in it.
If the Son of God should die in this manner,
neither he himself, nor any of the human race
could reap any advantages from his death, for in
the sight of God, the sufferings of men have no
value, any further than as they are attended with
virtuous dispositions in the mind of him who suf-
fers. A sudden death inflicted on the Messiah,
would

would not only defeat the intentions of heaven, but would also frustrate the ancient prophecies, and secure our kingdom from the imminent danger with which it is threatned.

By various arts within the reach of my power this may be accomplished; should I from the burning caverns of mount *Ætna*, or the smouldering flames of *Vesuvius*, raise a pitchy cloud charged with the poisoning seeds of death, conducting, yet not dispersing it, by a gentle wind over the great sea, 'till hovering in *Judea*, I quickly surround him in the pestilential damp, and in a moment break the springs of life. Or high in the liquid air I form a dense cloud of vast extent; either on the hills or over the plain where he stands; by a gentle gale directed to that side which is illuminated by the sun a large concavity is formed, from thence the solar beams are collected in a point where the strong expansive heat repels the ambient air; this suddenly recoils with strong elastic force; from thence the whirling blast begins, while men, and beasts, and trees, and stately towers, tost round and round fly mingling through the sky. In this manner I once destroyed the sons of *Job*, and so shall the Messiah perish if ye consent; or if ye rather choose, I'll burst in lightning from the clouds, and in a moment blast our dangerous foe. Thus did I once confound with instant death, the numerous flocks in the land of *Uz* and all the servile train.

Scarce

Scarce had he spoke, when lo, his breath enraged was turned into flames, his wide extended nostrils poured out a furious storm, which roar'd along the hills, a sad signal of his awful power, and deadly malice against the Son of God.

No sooner had he ended, than the dreadful god of Ammon rose to public view. A calm and deliberate malice, inspiring his votaries with a fierce and cruel superstition, join'd with the deepest hypocrisy, covered over with a stiff and formal gravity darkned his soul, and appeared in his wrinkled features; an enormous cloak dyed in blood, and reeking with human gore, horrible to view; hung over his tremendous and distorted shape. No one of the infernal crew was ever worshipped with more barbarous rites than he. The horrid screams of children in the fire, the bitter wailings of parental grief, mix'd with the hoarse sound of rattling drums, compos'd the music of his infernal sacrifice. Thus did the apostate Jews in the valley of Hinnom burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to devils. Near Satan's right hand stood this cruel spirit, who after rolling his hateful eyes round all the host, began in the following manner.

Hear, O Immortal spirits, companions dignified with high renown, and mighty power over this terraqueous globe, I now advise; but would carefully shun the extremes of abject fear and blind impetuous rage. A calm deliberate malice that allows one to search diligently for the most proper means, and to wait patiently for the proper

per time to put them in execution, this seems best to me. Abaddon has proposed that the Messiah should be put to death, so far I think he is right, but the means are certainly wrong, sudden force will not do, for that is out of the reach of our power. We know by sad experience the superior strength of our almighty foe; witness the dark, the deep, the burning lake, where once we fled in the utmost consternation. Have ye forgot his words when at the beginning he only said "arise, thou dreadful, thou horrible abyss, be thou the prison of all my future foes"; swift as the word it sprung from unessential night. He only frown'd and then the flames roll'd hissing round the dreary dungeon of the deep. We cannot do what we will, but only what he permits. Was our power equal to our malice we should not have been reduced to the necessity of such long consultations. By his permission we escaped from hell, and range the spacious earth; by his permission not by matchless power we stand now on Hermon's cloudy top, and weigh with prudent foresight what may come, or what our limited power and skill may possibly do, to secure or advance the interest of our kingdom. Abaddon says he'll send the roaring tempest, or poisoning vapours round the son of God, he'll cause the thunders to roll above his head, and the keen ætherial lightnings to blast him in a moment, all this might be done if no restraint was laid upon his power. Has he forgotten what happened once in the land of Ham, when Moses in the field of Zoan

Zoan stretched out to heaven his awful rod ; lo, the ponderous cloud poured down the rattling hail, and flaming fire, while flocks, and herds, and fruitful trees, and verdant fields all perish in the mingled storm. Where was he then ? Or why did he not direct the cloud over the detested fields of Goshan, and pour out his vengeance upon our avowed enemies ? If he commands the storm, why did the strong east wind drive back the Egyptian sea ? If the clouds convene, and the thunders roar, and the lightnings fly at his command, why did the Assyrian host, the zealous votaries of Nisroch perish in a moment before the walls of Jerusalem ? an angel from heaven we know directed the storm, nor could Abaddon with all his force restrain his power or prevent the dismal effects.

Once indeed in the land of Uz we beheld him clothed in fire, and riding on the whirlwind, while he scattered desolation amidst our foes : But even then limits were fixed, the charge was this “ behold all that he hath is in thy power, “ only upon himself put not forth thy hand”. To blast the son of God would be a vain attempt, for the flaming fire and stormy wind fulfil his word, this we lately saw while he passed the lake of Galilee ; a perfect calm had smooth’d the surface of the deep, and presented a polished mirror to the sky ; at that time he lay in sound repose, while Abaddon said, I’ll try my power, I’ll sink yon prophet in the raging flood ; high in the air he shook his rapid wings, the wind
B arofe,

arose, the foaming billows roll'd above the deck, and deadly horror stared in every face ; the son of God awoke, he only said " be hush'd ye " winds, ye roaring weaves be still" the winds obey'd, the rolling waters sunk in silent peace. In Gadara we felt his power, we trembled at his frown, and thousands fled at his rebuke. Even a whole legion of our host could not so much as drown the bristly herd, till he had given permission. Almighty power attends his words, and bands of angels camp around his path. Violence therefore, I judge impracticable ; but even supposing that might do, I dread what then might follow. Sure nothing could inflame Almighty vengeance to a higher pitch than this. What if his indignation should chain us down to the burning lake, and his wrath in a moment blow up these flames ten thousand fold more fierce than ever ? Or what if worse than all this should happen ? for who can tell what infinite and boundless wrath can do ? the son of God must die, as all the prophets have foretold, so much the better for us if he die by the hands of men, for in that case, the consequences will be to our advantage ; the chosen seed of Abraham shall then be cut off, or totally rejected for such a crime, the first shall rid us of a nation who have been in continual rebellion against our authority ; the the last shall certainly reduce them to our obedience. But here it may be objected, shall we concur with an event, so plainly decreed by heaven, and perhaps with a design to subvert the interest of

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of our kingdom ? to this I answer, that the death of the Messiah was never decreed by heaven. For he who sent him into the world, has given abundant proofs of his divine commission, by his doctrine and miracles ; the tendency and design of these is to make all men believe in him, and submit to his authority ; accordingly the evidence is so strong, that we ourselves cannot resist it. Now if God intended that all men should assent to the truth when fully presented to their minds ; he could never at the same time intend that they should oppose it ; if he commands the Jews to believe on him, he must also at the same time forbid them to offer him any violence ; can God decree the death of his son, and yet forbid men to fulfil that decree ? can he will contradictions ? no surely, for we have never found any thing of this kind from all the discoveries we have made ; and therefore I conclude that God never decreed, nor intended the death of the Messiah ; he only foresaw that the Jews would obstinately reject him, and at last put him to death, and for reasons best known to himself, he decreed not to hinder them. Now if he foresaw that the Jews would commit such a crime, should we endeavour to prevent it ? no, let us rather with all possible expedition hasten that event, which will deliver us from our enemy and involve that nation in guilt and misery. Let us therefore hasten his death, for the longer he lives in this world, he will certainly do us the more mischief. The method I would propose

for the execution of our designs is this ; you see how the chief priests, the Elders, the Scribes and Pharisees despise him for the meanness of his birth, they hate him for the freedom of his rebukes, and they envy his growing fame among the people ; these passions are exactly fitted to our purpose, let us every day add to their force ; for where these are predominant, no evidence however strong can possibly prevail. These men have already formed designs against him, nothing but the terror of admiring crowds has kept them within bounds. These indeed regard him as the Messiah, but after all, I presume it will be no hard matter to change their love into hatred, and their admiration into contempt. The multitude are always giddy and inconstant, insensible of true merit, led by passion, seldom governed by reflection, like the waves of the tempestuous deep tossed to and fro with every wind. From the highest to the lowest, they all expect a victorious prince, a Messiah who shall deliver them from the Roman yoke, and reign in splendor over all the world. These hopes must certainly be disappointed, disappointment will change their opinion, cool their affection, and rouse their indignation. What then must he appear to their prejudiced minds ; an impostor worthy of an infamous death. All this he plainly foresees, and so may we. The resurrection of Lazarus presents an occasion for raising political terrors in the minds of the great ; the voice of fame with ten thousand tongues and rapid

rapid wings will sound the wonderful story in every ear. Haste then ye princes, summon all your rage, swift as the solar beams let us fly to mount Zion, alarm the priests and quickly convene the Sanhedrim; let us awaken every furious passion in their breasts, while I endeavour to preside over all, and to dictate what they say. My principal intention is to inspire them with courage, to banish popular terrors far away, that a sentence may be speedily pronounced and carried into execution against the Messiah as an Impostor. If he makes no resistance, as I am confident he will not, his patience will then be considered by the multitude, as a proof of his impotence, a shameful disappointment of their hopes, and a sufficient reason for deserting his cause.

As soon as he had concluded, high shouts of loud applause poured forth from every tongue. The wide extending roar was heard on Bashan hills, and on Gilboas barren rocks the distant murmurs rung.

No sooner had this vain triumph ended in a profound silence, than Mammon rose at Satans left hand. By him the sordid sons of Avarice are led in glittering chains, the willing captives of his power; taught by his gentle, soft, persuasive tongue, they fondly imagine, that wealth and happiness are the same, that truth and justice, conscious worth, and sacred honour, and all the radiant charms of virtue, are only vain and empty names compared with gold. Behind this hellish peer, stood a horrid train of various forms,

ready to execute his will. There treachery appeared with double face, and fraud disguised in the garments of Simple truth, and open hearted honesty. By him stood violence stained with blood and grasping a dagger in his right hand, oppression with monstrous claws, shaking an iron rod of amazing length and frowning terrible on all below him ; these and many more, were the guards of his person, and the faithful ministers of his will ; every eye was fix'd on him, and every ear listened with keen attention, while thus he delivered the secret counsels of his heart.

Ye Gods of this spacious world, I have observed with great pleasure that, though various schemes have been proposed in this assembly, yet the same zeal for our common interest appears in every one. Our last advice I judge the best, I only offer what may improve the plan, and give our deliberations full perfection. There is no doubt but the chief priests and Elders are well disposed to execute our intentions, the popular indignation is the only restraint upon their zeal, this probably will continue till they find a convenient opportunity of laying hold on the Messiah by a stratagem consistent with their own safety. Open violence may be attended with too much danger ; but secret fraud, and dark nocturnal wiles may gain what we desire. One traitor has sometimes done what mighty hosts of armed foes could not atchieve. " The son of man " must be betrayed", I heard himself pronounce these words, while secretly I lay within the bag,
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and Judas me embraced with fond desire ; oft-times he viewed my glittering form, he loved me, he adored me in his heart ; at length I secretly stole into his imagination ; ever since, I have directed the train of his thoughts ; in hopes of endless store, and worldly pomp, he follows the Messiah, impatient for the day, when he shall sit upon the throne of David, and reign triumphant over all the earth. What if I should perswade this man, that nothing but violence will rouse the indignation of his master, that self defence and nothing else will move him to confound his enemies, and assume his native right as God's anointed and the king of Israel. If once I can perswade him to believe this, will he not embrace the first opportunity of delivering him into the hands of his enemies. He believes him already to be the Messiah, he believes the Messiah shall never die, and therefore he will apprehend no danger can arise from such an action. Let us therefore according to the advice already given, convene the Sanhedrim, confirm their prejudices, Strengthen their passions, and preside over their deliberations ; till at length they pass a decree for apprehending him. This will give Judas a fair opportunity of betraying him into their hands. What then shall he do ? he must either resist, or patiently submit. If he make any resistance, then he himself and all the prophets will be found Impostors ; if he submit, then his friends will all be deceived and disappointed in their expectations. They look for a mighty prince invincible in war, the dread of nations,

nations, the victorious Lord of this present world. All this they expect from him, who can heal the sick, raise the dead and conquer demons with a word. But all their hopes shall end in shame, and grief, and furious disappointment, when infamy, and pain, and death shall be his lot. Then perhaps we may reign secure and prosperous, unless the Almighty shall stir up some future broil to disturb our peace. If any shall think proper either to correct or enlarge upon what I have said, I shall hear it with pleasure.

Here he ceased while Satan rose with a ghastly smile of approbation and thus bespoke the whole assembly.

Ye mighty princes, I have heard with much satisfaction your various deliberations, for though different means have been proposed, you all agree in the same general design, nor is it to be expected that all our princes should see what is wisest and best in every case ; but when superior wisdom points out the shortest and the safest way to gain success, what should the inferior do but give assent without envy. In this, our union and the strength of our empire consists, in having only one view, the public good, and in a chearful submission to all the means by which it may be advanced. Not like the puney race of mortal men, where divided interests, partial views, and proud conceit of knowing all, throw them into confusion and make them easily submit to our superior sway. Moloch and Mammon have pointed out the best means to gain our purpose, they have
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hit upon the very scheme which I told you lay brooding in my mind. They have supported it by the same arguments which occurred to me, and I rejoice to find such probability of success in a case so dangerous and perplexing. Future occurrences, at present beyond our view, may give occasion to further consultations; in the mean time let us depart, and make such observations upon the present posture of affairs as may be subservient to our designs, let us assemble the Sanhedrim; inflame their rage, and spread darkness over their minds. Let Judas be hurried on to betray his Master, and all the rest of his disciples be terrified with hideous forms of death, while I endeavour amidst a complication of miseries to plunge himself in the deeps of despair.

At these words unnumbered legions bowed lowly round their hellish chief, till a thundering roar from the impending clouds gave the signal of departure. In a moment they fled from mount Hermon, in number like the buzzing insects which dance in the sun's mild evening rays. Through all the land they dispersed in legions, in broken parties, or wandering individuals, from the fruitful coasts of Sharon, to the lofty hills of Arnon, and from Lebanon to the barren rocks of Edom; every where they light unseen, especially on mount Zion and in Jerusalem, where they perched on the walls like hungry vultures searching for their prey.



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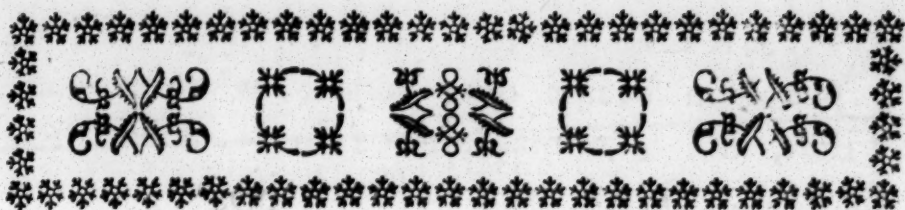
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T H E
M E S S I A H.



B O O K II.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

Nabash, Tilon, and Shamma having seen Lazarus raised from the dead, return to Jerusalem, and inform Caiaphas, who thereupon convenes the Sanhedrim. Annas relates the dangers he apprehended from Jesus of Nazareth. Alexander charges him with many crimes; and advises to put him to death. Nicodemus with great caution speaks in his favour. Joseph of Arimathea boldly pleads his cause. Caiaphas proposes the death of Jesus as an expedient to save the nation from the resentment of the Romans, a decree is passed to apprehend him, with this the council dissolves.

S C A R C E

SCARCE had the radiant sun diffused his golden beams over Judea, when Nahash, Tilon, and Shamma, arrived in Jerusalem from Bethany. These were distant relations of Lazarus; but enemies to Jesus, men of wicked lives, and yet strongly attached to the interest of the chief priests and the traditions of the elders. These three, though they had been witnesses of the resurrection of Lazarus, and of the divine power of him who raised him from the dead; yet were they so obstinate and hardened in their unbelief, that as soon as they arrived in the city, they went to the palace of the chief priest, where they waited for some time in a magnificent hall, 'till Caiaphas appeared, to whom Nahash addressed himself in the following words.

O Caiaphas sovereign priest of the most high God, no trifling matter could have induced us to disturb thy repose so early; prompted by a veneration for the successors of Aaron, and a sincere regard to the interest of our native country, we came to inform you of an extraordinary fact, which, in our opinion claims a speedy consideration, as it may be attended with very dangerous consequences. We are sensible how much perplexity, and what grievous apprehensions the rulers of Israel have already suffered, from the strange conduct of Jesus of Nazareth. No one of his actions has been so alarming, as that which yesterday we saw with our eyes. Five days ago a distant relation of ours died in Bethany, and

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was buried; upon that occasion we were present, and as his two sisters were in the deepest affliction for the loss of a beloved brother, we thought it expedient to visit them yesterday, and administer some consolation. While we were present, this wandering prophet arrives in the town, together with his disciples. As soon as he appeared the excessive sorrow of the two sisters was again revived, for both they and the deceased Lazarus were strongly attached to him, and interested in his favour. What added to their grief was an opinion they entertained of his extraordinary power, that had he been there in a proper time, their brother had not died. This they told him, upon which he desired they would conduct him to the sepulchre. Accordingly, we with the two sisters, and a considerable number besides, went along with him directly to the place, which happened to be a cave whose entrance was shut with a large stone. When we came to the sepulchre the grief of his relations broke out afresh, in bitter lamentations, and a flood of tears, Jesus also bore a share in the mournful scene, and wept for the death of his friend. After a little time spent in this manner, he desired us to remove the stone; against this it was objected, that the stench of the putrified corps would be intolerable; but he insisted, and accordingly the stone was removed. Instantly he lifts his eyes to heaven, and repeats a short prayer. Then looking into the sepulchre he cries aloud, "Lazarus come forth." In a moment to the great astonishment

nishment of all spectators, the dead person revived, and came out of the sepulchre, with his hands and feet tied in grave clothes, and his head bound about with a napkin. He then commanded some of the company to loose him and let him go. Wonder, fear, and joy, were strongly expressed in every countenance; in profound silence every one gazed for some time at Lazarus, and he at them; he would now and then look at his own hands, his feet, his legs, his arms, survey his body, and feel if all was real. At last he fell prostrate on the ground at the feet of Jesus, most gratefully acknowledging the favour he had received. In short every one was filled with a sacred veneration for the prophet, who had raised him from the dead. Even we at that time were sensibly struck with surprise at what we saw: But now after some deliberate reflections upon the whole, we can scarce believe what we saw with our eyes. We are doubtful whether our senses might not have deceived us; and yet again, if we doubt of this, we may doubt of every thing: And seeing we can not deny a fact so well attested, we rather incline to doubt of the power by which it is performed, and are extremely apprehensive least actions of this kind should occasion some public disturbance: for the multitude every where are strongly inclined to receive him as the Messiah. But herein they are certainly deceived, for who can believe, that ever the Roman power will tremble at the name of this fictitious prince, or yield their far extend-

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ed conquests to the son of a carpenter. Must not he who assumes the title of God's anointed, without the splendor and dignity belonging to that character, be a dangerous impostor? Should the blind and unthinking multitude be so mad as to choose him for their king, would not this kindle the flames of war, and bring desolation on our native country? These apprehensions have strangely disturbed our last night's repose, nor could we enjoy rest, 'till these perplexing terrors, together with the fact which gave occasion to them, were fully related to thee, O sacred priest, whose active zeal and commanding influence, can alone prevent the approaching danger.

This narrative was heard by Caiaphas, with the strongest emotions of envy, hatred, astonishment and fear. These are no imaginary terrors, said he, for we have often dreaded some terrible calamity might arise from the actions of this man, should he be allowed to continue. A prudent foresight is highly necessary to prevent what you suspect; and the information you have given, as it merits the attention of the Sanhedrim, so shall it be laid before their serious consideration with all possible expedition.

Immediately the informers withdrew, and an order was sent to assemble the Sanhedrim, which accordingly met in the temple. Here the consultation began with the speech of Annas father in law to the high priest, an old man of a weak understanding, extremely subject to fear, from
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the apprehension of imaginary dangers, and now more afraid than ever, from the exaggerated account he had received from Caiaphas. With a grave and sullen face, timed and circumspective eyes, he spoke in the following manner.

Ye rulers of Israel, and children of the family of Aaron, how long shall we endure the terrors of approaching desolation, without exerting ourselves to prevent that misery, which every prudent eye may see, and which every considerate mind trembles to think of. Jesus of Nazareth has often been the subject of former consultations; these have hitherto ended in strange confusions, vain resolutions, and insignificant threatenings. His growing party and reputation give us new alarms every day. Sure nothing of this kind was ever heard of in any former age, that an obscure person, sprung from the base mechanic tribe, and still in a condition of the meanest poverty, should intimidate and perplex to such a degree, the scribes and pharisees, the priests and elders of Israel. It is true he has wrought many extraordinary miracles, the lepers have been cleansed by him, the paralytick restored to strength and activity, the blind to perfect sight, and the deaf to their hearing; he has made the dumb to speak with fluency, and the lame to walk with freedom and agility. In short the diseased of all kinds, are healed by a word of his mouth, or a touch of his hand; whether absent or present, the cure always succeeds, if he only commands it. Shall I mention his power over the devils?

that

that is universally known; and what is yet more astonishing, he has at several times restored the dead to life; you have heard of the daughter of Jairus, the widow's son of Nain, and now I can assure you, upon the testimony of witnesses, no ways prejudiced in his favour, that he has no later than yesterday, and no further off than Bethany, raised to life a man, who had been dead four days, and lay consuming in the grave. Remote ages and far distant countries, may, if they incline, either doubt or deny the truth of these extraordinary facts; but it is impossible for us to call in question what we find every day supported by irresistible evidence. We may indeed dispute the power by which they are done, and in this case we can only judge from the effects produced; if these are good, we conclude the power is from God; but if they are bad, Satan must be the prime agent. At first view we are inclined to believe, that to heal the sick, to cast out the devils, and raise the dead must certainly proceed from the divine power. But let us consider their remote consequences, and then perhaps we shall find greater evils arising from these, than all the good effects they have produced. We cannot be absolutely certain of what will really happen, but we may judge of what is probable, and we should prevent future evils, if possibly we can. What is marvellous and surprising, especially to the multitude, generally engrosses the whole attention; it so confounds and astonishes the mind, that it allows no time
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for deliberate enquiry, but commands their assent before reason can judge and determine the cause; thus we behold the nation already deceived by his wonderful works, and the son of Joseph falsely mistaken for the mighty heir of David's throne. When the promised Messiah appears in our land we are assured by the prophets, "that he shall be higher than the kings of the earth, that his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust; the kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring presents, the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; yea all kings shall fall down before him, and all nations shall serve him." Who can with any degree of reason or common sense believe, that the son of a carpenter is the mighty prince here described. He has neither birth, nor interest, nor power to recommend him, How then can he ever rise to the dignity of a king? By no other means than low deceit, and fierce rebellion stirred up by the blinded mob. How shall we act in such a case? Either we must oppose the ignoble herd, or we must submit to their choice; if we do the first, then a civil war ensues, the bloody field must decide the quarrel, and a variety of woes may sink us to the grave. Suppose we should submit to this pretended Messiah, either from necessity, or from choice, in hopes of recovering our ancient liberties, then what dreadful and unnumbered

bered calamities may be the consequence? A foreign power invades our land, victorious Rome shall thunder at our gates, our native country shall become a scene of desolation; horror and death shall ride triumphant in every corner; our houses, our villages, our cities, and even this holy temple may perish in devouring flames, while our nearest relations and dearest friends are led into captivity among the heathen. All this may come, and Rome may do what Babylon did once before. Let us take warning from an ancient tradition, which says that Armolus will come in the latter days and destroy our nation. The imperial city was founded by Romulus who called it by his own name; this I am inclined to believe is the same with Armolus of whom we stand in so much danger. Thus have I pointed out the dreadful consequences which in all probability will arise from our suffering Jesus of Nazareth to work his miracles, deceive the people, and lead the multitude wherever he pleases. Judge now whether these apprehensions are well grounded, and by what means the danger may be prevented.

Annas having thus spoken, Alexander rose next. The fame of Jesus had raised his envy, and filled him with malice. Prejudice and superstition had contracted his mind, which together with a violent temper and a haughty disdainful spirit rendered him bitter and censorious to the last degree. With enraged looks, and a harsh discordant voice he thus began.

Men

Men, brethren, and fathers, how often shall we resume this hateful subject; that a man of the lowest rank, the son of a base mechanic, doomed to servile toil from his very womb, like the false dissembling Gibeonites, condemned to hew the wood, who should themselves have been hewn to death; that such a man as he, should boldly assume the sacred name of God's Anointed, and every day alarm us with the apprehensions of public danger. I never can speak, nor think of him without indignation. It is true he is admired by the crowd, but who are they? The ignorant, the base and contemptible dregs of the nation, men like himself. Have any of the rulers, or the pharisees believed on him? No, the meanest of the people only are his followers; "they know not the law and are accursed." He draws the multitude after him by strange mysterious actions; this is no new thing, the marvellous always attracts the mob; in this manner the subjects of Busris were deceived by the lying miracles of Iannes and Jambres: The soft, the smiling face of complacency, with gentle and insinuating words, easily engage their affections. By these solemn arts, he imposes on the crowd, and draws them into his snare: in the same manner as Absalom deceived the people, and shook the foundations of his fathers throne. The character of the Messiah is fairly delineated in the writings of the ancient prophets; we only, have a right to explain their meaning, for the ignorant people are no competent judges, nor have they any authority

thority to explain the holy scriptures. Who can submit to the son of Joseph, or choose a carpenter for his king? none but the base and sordid people, who have no just notions of true worth and real dignity. Shall this man with his enormous ax cut down the stately oak, the tall imperial tree, whose far extending boughs, now reach to the most distant nations? Or shall he with his ponderous hammer beat kingdoms into dust? Or, shall he who lived so many years obscure, untaught in arms, unskill'd in every nobler art, shall he, I say, at length, ascend the rapid car, and ride in triumph over the necks of his vanquished foes? " Shall " he execute vengeance upon the heathen, and " punishments upon the people, binding their " kings in chains, and their nobles with fetters " of iron?" Let him once perform these heroic deeds, then only shall we submit to his authority. In vain are all his pretensions till these things be accomplished.

It must indeed be granted he has already done great things, he has stolen the hearts of the people, and rendered us contemptible in their eyes; a dark eclipse lies on our ancient glory; we can no longer boast of that esteem, honour, and sacred veneration which formerly we enjoyed; we are lost in the splendor of his superior renown, like the brightest stars in the sun's meridian blaze. Has real worth aggrandized his name, or has purest sanctity given elevation to his deeds? No, he has been guilty of base detraction, charged us unjustly with abominable crimes, and denounced
against

against us a variety of woes. These are his wiles to catch the weak, and sink us low in their esteem; by these artifices, the multitude are prejudiced against our authority, and the world is gone after him. By ancient right we sit in Moses's seat; we are the rulers of Israel, the only teachers of the chosen people, and therefore should be treated with honour, respect, and mild submission; for so it is written, "thou shalt not revile the Gods, nor speak evil of the rulers of thy people." By what authority then has he traduced our names, and loaded us with reproach. What shall we think of that man, who pours contempt upon the traditions of the elders, and condemns our religious worship as vain and insignificant; for these are his words, as I am informed, "in vain do they worship God teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, for ye have made the word of God of none effect by your traditions." If he regarded the God of our fathers, or the law of Moses, would he frequently, and publicly despise the holy sabbath? No surely, but this he has done with the greatest confidence; by healing diseases, suffering men to carry their beds, and his own disciples to pluck the ears of corn upon that holy day. And what is yet more impious and amazing, he presumes to pardon sin, which none but God himself can do. He threatens vengeance against the chosen race, and sad expulsion from the promised land, though God has sworn to Abraham, and his seed to be their God for ever.

"Have

“ Have you not frequently heard him represent-
“ ed as a glutton, a wine biber, a friend of pub-
“ licans and sinners”, these seem to be his fa-
vourite companions, these he prefers before us,
confidently affirming that they shall enter the
kingdom of heaven sooner than we, whom he
describes as the vilest of hypocrites, the children
of the Devil, and the heirs of damnation.

Now this is the admired person, whom it seems
we must receive as the long expected Messiah.
I abhor the thought of such an one, and look up-
on him as the most daring Impostor. He appeals
to his miracles, I am told, as a proof of his divine
commission ; but to me they are none ; they are
only false delusive arts, such as the sons of Ham
could boast, when they turned rods into serpents,
and waters into blood. There are false miracles
as well as true, this is plainly supposed by Mo-
ses, when he says “ If there arise among you
“ a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giv-
“ eth thee a sign or a wonder ; and the sign or
“ the wonder come to pass whereof he spake un-
“ to thee, saying let us go after other gods, which
“ thou hast not known, and let us serve them.
“ Thou shalt not hearken to the words of that
prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, for the
Lord your God proveth you, to know whi-
ther you love the Lord your God with all your
heart, and with all your soul “ now this is
exactly our case at present, and Moses has di-
rected us how we should act, in the following
words “ and that prophet or dreamer of dreams
“ shall

“ shall be put to death, so shalt thou put away
 “ the evil from midst of thee ” the wonder done
 by this man, I grant are so many, and done in
 so public a manner, that it is impossible to deny
 them. But the question is, by what power are
 they wrought? many doubt and for my part, I
 positively deny that they are wrought by the
 divine power: the reason I give for it is this,
 we have often demanded of him a sign from hea-
 ven: but this he would never grant, only telling
 us “ that as Jonas was three days and three
 “ nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the son of
 “ man be three days and three nights in the
 “ heart of the earth ” which was nothing to the
 purpose, for if his miracles are done by the pow-
 er of God, he could easily have given us a sign
 from heaven, as well as upon the earth. Dont
 you remember, that when Rezin king of Syria,
 and Pekah the son of Remaliah came with their
 confederate armies against this city, that the
 prophet Isaiah said unto Ahaz “ Ask thee a sign
 “ of the Lord thy God, ask it either in the
 “ depth, or in the height above”. The prophet
 would have granted either, but this man ab-
 solutely denies our request; the reason is clear,
 because it is out of his power. Now we know
 that nothing is too hard for the Lord, and there-
 fore I conclude that his miracles are wrought by
 the power of Belzebub, or by the amazing
 charm of the Tetragrammaton, * which by some

* The word JEHOVAH, consisting of four Hebrew letters,
 a word which the Jews from a superstitious veneration, never
 pronounce

means he has secretly obtained. This man beyond all doubt is an Impostor ; none surely could have a better opportunity of knowing him, than his own country men ; and these, I am told, were once so provoked with his insolence, that had he not made his escape, he would have been thrown over the rocks as a punishment for his crime. A prophet sent from God will never publish a notorious falsehood to aggrandize his reputation ; but this I can prove him guilty of, by many witnesses, who heard him affirm, that he is older than Abraham, “ before Abraham “ was, I am” said he. By this declaration he enraged the multitude to such a degree, that they threatned to stone him to death. But this transport like many others was soon over, and cowardice succeeded in its place. I grant indeed that any attempt made upon him, may be attended with danger, considering what a formidable party he has already drawn over to his interest ; but the danger will increase daily ; and therefore should we, through cowardice and base timidity, suffer him to go on, the contagion will spread ; and his faction grow too powerful to be suppressed. For the power of eloquence dwells upon his tongue, while the listening crowd lose their reason in amazement. Neither Greece, nor

pronounce. The Rabbis say that Moses, by virtue of the word *Jebovah*, engraved on his miraculous rod, performed all the prodigies spoken of in the scripture ; and that *Jesus Christ* while he was in the temple, having stolen this ineffable name, by virtue of the same, wrought all his miracles. CALMET'S Dictionary.

Rome could ever produce a man like this, so fit to move and mislead the people, and sow sedition through the earth. You may remember how the officers behaved whom we once set to apprehend him ; they went ; and in a moment his soft insinuating tongue stole away their hearts ; they returned without executing their commission, and told as an apology ; “ that never man spoke “ like this man”. Danger advances in our view, it awakens our fear, and should awaken fortitude, and wise precaution, before it be too late. The passover draws nigh, who knows but that may be the fatal day, predestined for the deeds of wild uproar, and fierce rebellion ? the whole nation will assemble at that time, and who can tell what delusive arts he may practise upon that occasion. What if he should claim the sovereign power ? will not his followers support his claim ? doubtless they will ; shall we resign our authority, and give way to the irresistible torrent of a popular election ? Or, sword in hand, shall we defend our rights ? a sad alternative ! disgrace, or danger, perhaps death itself may be the end. Why then should we delay the application of those means, which alone can preserve the public tranquillity ? our interest, our authority, our lives, and all that is dear and sacred in this world call loudly for the execution of Justice upon that deceiver. The case is plain, either he, or we must perish. Let us therefore publish a decree, ordering every man to declare where he may be found, that with all possible

possible expedition, he may be apprehended, condemned, and punished according to his crimes.

During all this time, a variety of passions strongly agitated the mind of Nicodemus ; he was full of indignation at the bitter revilings of Alexander, grieved to hear an innocent and worthy person threatened with so much contempt. He loved the conversation and character of Jesus ; but was afraid of given offence to his brethren, by speaking too freely upon that subject, and therefore with great caution he expressed himself in the following words.

Men of Israel, and children of the stock of Abraham, it must be allowed that every method by which imposture can be detected, or rebellion prevented, justly claims our attention, and deserves the highest approbation. Sedition comes from hell, and should be driven back to its accursed habitation, to roar in chains and penal fire. The monster newly born is easily quelled, but when the enormous shape grows fierce and conscious of its own strength, then whole nations perish in its jaws, or grown beneath its feet. Had Theudas who kindled the flames of rebellion, or Judas of Galilee obtained their wicked designs, we had this day been numbered with the dead, or slaves to the lawless power of ambitious tyrants. But they perished both according to their crimes, and so may they all perish, who attempt to ruin their native country. The time is either come, or will very soon come, when the great Messiah will bless our land, with

liberty, and peace, and an universal empire. Daniel's seventy weeks have nigh run their tedious round, the sceptre is almost departed from Judah, our branches are withered, and our roots decay, under the cold damp shade of mighty Rome. The prince of peace must soon appear, and all men are waiting for the redemption of Israel ; this may give occasion for ambitious claims, a bold pretender may deceive the ignorant, and sad destruction arise from the misapprehension of ancient prophecies. But while we avoid one extreme, let us beware of running into another, that is, groundless fear, jealousy, and hatred. These have sometimes kindled the flames of war, and shed the blood of the innocent. Bethlehem and all her coasts can bear witness to this, when about thirty years ago their harmless infants perished by the sword. Some thought the Messiah was then born, and Herod himself seems to have been of the same opinion, when through fear and jealousy of the infant king he committed such a barbarous deed.

But why should we apprehend any danger from Jesus or his followers ? I can see no reason for it. I am well assured, that upon every occasion he expresses the highest regard for Moses and the prophets, that he strictly commands honour and submission to our authority. These are his own words " the Scribes and Pharisees " sit in Moses's seat, whatever therefore they " command you to do, observe and do it " when the lepers are cleansed by him, he sends them directly

directly to the priests, and commands them to offer a sacrifice according to the law. Why should we apprehend any danger from such a man, or suspect any deceit in him, who commands his followers to obey us? no wonder though he be commonly attended by the multitude, seeing he generously heals their diseased, casts out the Devils, and sometimes raises their dead; nor is it the ignorant people alone who demand his assistance. The rulers of certain synagogues, some of our own nobility, and a very honourable centurion have applied to him for relief, and obtained it. But there is one thing which makes me believe, that he can have no ambitious designs against the government; the fact is well known, attested by many thousands who were eye and ear witnesses. Having once fed a great multitude in the desert, with a few loaves and small fishes, they were so astonished at the miracle, that they immediately concluded he was the Messiah, and with one consent, offered to accept of him as their king. Here was a fair opportunity for ambition to gain its end; but he absolutely refused the dignity; they urged, importuned, and went about to compel him, but all in vain, for he privately withdrew into a secret place, and left them to disperse at their leisure. **This I think may give us full security, that he has no intention to disturb the government, or claim any authority in the nation.** Various are the conjectures of men concerning this extraordinary person; **some think**

he is the Messiah “ others suppose him to be “ Elias, Jeremias, or one of the ancient prophets returned to this world”. Some are pleased to call him an Impostor, while Herod, in whose jurisdiction for the most part he resides, “ is of opinion that he is John the baptist risen “ from the dead”. The Roman governor has taken no notice of him, which plainly shows, that he is under no apprehensions of danger. Now amidst such a variety of opinions, how shall we judge with any certainty of his character? doubtless he has friends and enemies; the former, perhaps may exaggerate his merit, and the latter detract from it; what shall we do in this case? to believe both is impossible, to believe only the one, leaves us still in the most doubtful suspense, or under a gross mistake; to condemn an absent person without hearing what he can say for himself, is utterly unjust, and forbidden by the law. It is therefore my judgment that we should either let him alone altogether, or suspend our decision till we shall have a fair opportunity of enquiring into his pretensions, by a full and personal examination; and if he can give no proofs of a divine commission, let him then be punished as a deceiver.

By this time a lowring discontent frowned on every countenance, and rage began to sparkle in every eye. But as soon as he had concluded, Joseph stood up in the midst of them; this man had gained a high reputation for his wealth and power, but more for his virtue and piety. A
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manly courage appeared in his looks, while solid wisdom dwelt upon his tongue. The inheritance of his fathers which lay on the fertile hill of Arimathea, was the usual place of his residence. There he spent a great part of his time in solitude and contemplation ; the sacred writings afforded him a delightful entertainment. While in society, he was a careful and profitable spectator of human conduct, while alone he was pious and devout. The wonderful actions and extraordinary character of Jesus had frequently been the subject of his private meditation. Perhaps no man of less dignity and importance than himself could have obtained a patient hearing after what Nicodemus had said, as soon as he attempted to speak, the confused murmurings of the chief priests and Elders sunk into a profound silence. While thus he freely expressed the sentiments of his heart.

Ye rulers of Israel, I beg your attention to what I say. It is now above three years since Jesus of Nazareth appeared as a teacher in Galilee, and Judea ; his character is indeed variously represented ; but methinks by this time the truth of the matter might have been sufficiently known. The whole nation has had opportunity of being acquainted with his doctrine, for it was not delivered secretly, but in the most public manner, in every synagogue and in the temple itself. His miracles can give no just cause of offence to any one ; has he not been eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame ? has he not opened the ears

of the deaf, and caused the tongue of the dumb to sing? has he not delivered many from the power of malignant dæmons, and raised some from the regions of the dead? these are facts undeniable, done every day, before thousands of witnesses. And yet after all he is branded with the odious name of an impostor, and it seems must answer for his conduct before our tribunal. What shall we say for ourselves? have we by the most criminal sloth suffered him to deceive the people so long? How many opportunities have we had before this time to call him to an account? he has been no stranger in Jerusalem, thousands have heard him in this sacred temple, and have seen with admiration the wonders of his power. The fear of the multitude is but a dishonourable and unmanly excuse “ the fear
“ of man bringeth a snare, but sanctify ye the
“ Lord of hosts, and let him be your fear and
“ your dread; for we judge not for men, but
“ for the Lord, who is with us in the judg-
“ ment” and therefore, we ought to judge righteously. But this can never be done, unless we attend impartially to the evidence on both sides.

Many things have already been said in opposition to this man, you have heard them with patience. Justice therefore claims your attention, while I offer to your consideration, a few things which may be said in his behalf. Some, we are told, look upon him as a false prophet and a deceiver of the people. But what proof have we of this? has he taught any doctrines incon-

sistent

sistent with truth and righteousness, or opposite to any of the divine perfections? If he has, let us hear them. Has he delivered any precepts inconsistent with the laws of God, or the happiness and perfection of human nature? Let them be mentioned. Has he not explained, and recommended, and enforced the law and the prophets? “think not I am come to destroy the law and the prophets, said he, I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For till heaven and earth pass away, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no ways pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” what more could any man say in behalf of the sacred writings, than this man has said? these are not the marks of an impostor, if miracles are the proof of a divine commission, how can we deny him to be a prophet? neither Zoans field, nor Edoms flood, nor the waste howling wilderness, nor the streams of Jordan; none of these can boast of miracles so full of grace and mercy as these which he has done. In many of the former, our fathers beheld the power, justice, and indignation of the Almighty; but in the latter, we see his tender pity and compassion, his kind affection, love and good will, to the wretched and miserable.

It is well known that John the Baptist wrought no miracles, yet all men regarded him as a prophet, let us remember what he said of this man, when we sent priests and levites to Bethabara,

to enquire whether he was Elias or the Messiah, to whom he replied, that he was neither of the two; being sent only to prepare the Messiah's appearance, by preaching the doctrine of repentance, and remission of sins to all who waited for redemption in Israel. He told them that the Messiah was already come; but was unknown to the world. And what is yet more remarkable, upon the very day after, as he walked along with some of his disciples, he spied Jesus of Nazareth, and told them plainly that he was the person. At another time, while he baptized at the streams of Ennon, I am told by good authority, that some of his disciples moved with envy, complained that Jesus was more successful in gaining proselytes than he. To whom he replied, I rejoice to hear of these tidings, for I told you before that I am not the Messiah; he only whose glory you seem to envy, is the very person; the number of his disciples will daily encrease; but mine shall be diminished. Accordingly his disciples ever since the death of their master, have followed this man. Whatever John said of him has been exactly fulfilled. And therefore I conclude, that the characters of the two persons, must stand or fall together. If John was a true prophet, Jesus can be no impostor, if Jesus be a deceiver, John must have been engaged in the same plot; which to me is highly improbable. For I am told they were strangers to one another, living at a great distance, men of quite different tempers. The one extremely gentle, sociable,
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and familiar; the other reserved, distant and austere.

Many indeed are prejudiced against Jesus, for the meanness of his birth, and his low estate in the world. But what is birth? A meer accident, out of the power of every man; God gives us birth, but he gives it by whom he pleases, "he maketh rich, and he maketh poor." How often has he pulled the mighty from their splendid thrones, and raised the mean to the highest dignity? Was not Moses once in the condition of a helpless orphan, exposed among the flags of the river Nile? And yet God raised him to be the leader of his people, and king in Jeshurun. David the son of Jesse was once a shepherd, musician, and armour bearer, to Saul the son of Kish, till God exalted him to the throne of Israel. Amos was neither a prophet nor prophet's son, he was only a herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit, and yet the Lord took him as he followed the flock, and said unto him, "go prophesy unto my people Israel." A man's birth can neither add to, nor detract from his personal merit. I despise the son of a king if he is a bad man, I honour and love the son of a carpenter, if he is a good man, and a friend of his country. What though some of his neighbours, and acquaintances should treat him with contempt? Is there any thing strange in that? Must we suppose them all to be competent judges of personal worth and true merit? No surely, fools of every kind high or low, rich or poor, judge of men,

only from their outward appearance. But this is a false standard, for there are many circumstances in human life, which reduce the greatest men to a level with the very meanest. Neither wealth, nor power, nor worldly splendor can make us great in the sight of God; great virtue only, make men truly great in his account. Now if we judge by this standard, who can be greater than he, who instructs the ignorant, comforts the afflicted, reforms the vicious, heals the diseased, casts out devils, and raises the dead?

His freedom of speech, I understand, has given offence to many, there is nothing strange in that, the prophets in every age have been hated for the same reason. We may every day see the truth of Solomon's observation, "Rebuke a fool, and he will hate thee, rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee." If we are conscious of these crimes he has laid to our charge, Why should we be offended? Let us reform, and then his rebukes will cease. The same freedom he uses with all men, is not this a proof of his integrity? when we see that he flatters no man. Can he give a more convincing proof of his regard to God, and love to his country than by promoting the interest of religion, and the reformation of bad men, even at the hazard of his life? Was not this the work of all the prophets? who were generally despised, persecuted, and put to death on that very account.

Has he threatned the destruction of our city and nation? So did the ancient prophets, and

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you know how exactly their words were accomplished by the Chaldean army. Whatever vengeance he may have threatned against our native country for our iniquities, seems to have a strong foundation in the prophecies of Daniel, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy; and to anoint the most holy: And the people of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war, desolations are determined." These seventy weeks are near an end; take heed therefore what ye do to this man, lest we bring upon ourselves the very evil we intended to avoid.

The Roman armies, we are told, may invade our land; if we allow this man who pretends to be the Messiah and king of the Jews, to live, and guide the inconstant multitude at his pleasure. But to me these apprehensions are altogether groundless. The Roman governor beyond all dispute, will carefully attend to his own interest, and the public tranquillity. He discovers no symptoms of danger, why then should we be afraid?

He has been charged with the most public violation of the holy sabbath; But how does that appear? He heals the diseased, and casts out the devils.

devils upon that day; Is there any impiety in this, or will any man undertake to answer what he said in his own defence? "What man," said he, "shall there be among you, that shall have
" one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it and lift
" it out? How much then is a man better than
" a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well
" on the sabbath day. For mercy is better than
" sacrifice, and the knowledge of God than
" burnt-offerings."

If the traditions of the elders contradict the laws of God, why should we defend them, or be displeased when he points out the contradiction. The written word of God seems to be the only rule of our faith and practice. To the
" law and to the testimony, if they speak not
" according to these things, it is because there is
" no light in them."

He is charged with blasphemy for presuming to pardon sin. It is true, that none hath power to forgive sins but God: But if God has given him power to heal the diseased and raise the dead, may he not also give him authority to pardon sin. The one I am sure is as difficult as the other, and the one is done in confirmation of the other.

He has been accused of gluttony and drunkenness, a familiar companion of publicans and sinners. But how shall we answer his apology,
" They that are whole, need not the physician,
" but they that are sick; I came not to call the
" righteous,

“righteous, but sinners to repentance.” And how indeed can any man instruct and reform wicked men, without conversing with them? We may be led from the abhorrence of their vices, to hate their persons, and avoid their conversation; But he who seeks after such degenerate and lost sinners, on purpose to reform and save them, must possess a very uncommon share of goodness and condescension. Why should we take it amiss if he prefers repenting harlots and publicans, to impenitent scribes and pharisees? for God himself will do the same.

I grant indeed there are false miracles as well as true, and Moses has pointed out the difference in the very words before mentioned. The false prophet says, “let us go after other gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them, thou shalt not hearken to the words of that prophet.” Can this be applied to Jesus of Nazareth? Or where is the resemblance between him, and the magicians of Egypt? Their miracles were wrought in confirmation of the grossest idolatry, and to support the authority of a wicked and tyrannical prince; they did mischief but could not remove it; they were confounded and out-done by Moses and Aaron, who wrought their miracles in the name of the true God, by authority received from him, in confirmation of his divinity, for the deliverance of his people, and the reformation of the Egyptians from the most abominable idolatry. I grant that no miracles wrought in confirmation of any doctrines, that

that are unreasonable, impious, or of an immoral tendency, ought to be regarded. But sure I am, this is not the case with Jesus of Nazareth. Has he ever proposed to draw us aside from the worship of the true God? Has he taught any doctrines inconsistent with reason, or with the known perfections of the Deity? Has he ever recommended any thing dishonourable to God, or injurious to men? Let that appear, and I shall boldly pronounce him an impostor, and worthy of an infamous death. I am well informed that upon all occasions he recommends to the people, the worship of one God, even the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: None attends it more punctually, or joins in it more fervently than he. His miracles are all done in the name of the true God, and to his power alone he ascribes them; they are wrought in confirmation of the most reasonable, the most pious, and useful doctrines. Can these be false miracles? If so, there never were any true ones. I am surprised that any should ascribe these wonders of divine power and grace, to the agency of the devil, for nothing can be more repugnant to the character of that malignant spirit, or more subversive of his kingdom. Who can believe that Satan is become our friend, that the apostate angels compassionate our misery, that division reigns in hell, and half their armies combat in our cause? He that can believe such contradictions let him believe them. Jesus of Nazareth has bound the strong man and spoiled him of his goods.

goods; they dread his power, they flee from his presence, and tremble at his rebuke.

It is true he denied a sign from heaven, but shall we thence conclude he wanted power? No, his power we know extends to the regions of the dead; Have ye not heard how once in Cana of Galilee he turned water into wine? How once and again he feasted thousands with a small quantity of food? How he rebuked the winds and the sea, and they obeyed him? What can be too hard for such a man as this? Perhaps it was unreasonable to demand of him a sign from heaven, after we had shown so little regard to the wonders he had done on earth. What signs could we desire from heaven? Suppose the radiant sun should be turned into darkness, or the silver moon lost in the nocturnal sky: If the dreadful thunder should roar along the heavens, and glaring meteors flash above our heads. If these should happen at our desire, or appear in obedience to his command, our curiosity might perhaps be gratified, and our wonder excited: But are we certain that all objections and difficulties would be removed? No, unbelief might still proceed in its unreasonable demands, and ascribe all these to the established laws of nature. If Satan has any power to work miracles on earth, why not in the air also? we are more liable to be deceived by distant objects, than by those that are near; there can be no deceit where we have an opportunity of examining with the greatest familiarity, which is exactly the case with the miracles of

Jesus

Jesus, and accordingly the evidence is so irresistible that no man can deny the wonders he has done.

And as for the amazing charms of the Tetragrammaton by which some imagine he does all his mighty works, it would be trifling to give an answer to it; for sure no possible combination of letters or sounds, can ever work a miracle. When he denied a sign from heaven, he promised to give us one from the earth below, "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." As these words point at some future event, time only can explain their meaning. He appealed to the signs of the times, desiring us to consider these impartially. No time was ever attended with more amazing signs than the present. Daniel's seventy weeks are nigh expired, for this reason we are every day looking for the coming of the Messiah. About thirty years ago, an extraordinary sign appeared in the heavens, a beaming star of uncommon magnitude was seen in the aerial height; at the same time certain wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem, conducted from their native country by its tardy motion through the sky; they applied to Herod, enquiring for him who was then born to be the king of the Jews. Strict enquiry was then made into the place of his nativity, Bethlehem was fixed on as foretold by the prophet. This is a fact well known to many yet alive. I might also ap-

peal

peal to the testimony of certain men living in the neighbourhood of that city, who about the same time were surprized with a vision in the night while they watched their flocks in the field, "Behold an angel appeared to them, saying, fear not, for I bring unto you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be unto you and unto all people; this night is born unto you in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. If any should call in question the truth of this fact, I shall appeal to another, which none will deny, and which all must remember with horror, I mean the slaughter of all the children in that country from two years old and under. It is impossible to account for an action so barbarous and inhuman, any other way, than by allowing the truth of these extraordinary facts, the appearance of that star, the declaration and enquiry of the wise men, the information given concerning the place of the Messiah's birth, by the Scribes and Pharisees. All these seem to have perswaded Herod that the Messiah was then born in that place, and dreading the loss of his own authority, he endeavoured to prevent it, by an act of the most cruel policy heard of in any age. If the Messiah was then born, we have reason to believe, that the divine providence would not suffer him to perish in the common slaughter, for we are told, "that he shall abide for ever." I have often heard it said that about twenty years ago, a child appeared in this very temple, immediately after the passover;

passover; whose surprising genius, and understanding, astonished all that heard his questions and answers, in conversation with our most learned Rabbi's. What if this child should be the same that escaped the vengeance of Herod, the same man who now teacheth the people and worketh miracles? These are the signs of the times. John the Baptist bore witness of him, he was doubtless a prophet, and it is well known in all the hill country of Judea what extraordinary signs happened to his father Zacharias; how in a moment he was struck dumb in the temple, and never recovered the use of his speech 'till after the birth and circumcision of his son, when he immediately foretold, "that he would be the prophet of the Highest, and prepare the way of the Lord." These are some of the extraordinary signs which have happened since the birth of this man, who I am told is not yet forty years old. Now the truth of these facts together with the amazing works done by him of late years, claim our serious attention.

I am told indeed that upon a certain occasion, he made use of these strange words, "Before Abraham was, I am." These I grant at first view have the appearance of falsehood: But is it to be supposed that any one of common prudence, would attempt to deceive the world, by affirming that for a truth, which every one must know to be false? Far less is this to be expected from one, who in all other respects has discovered himself to be an enemy to all manner of dissimulation.

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This inclines me to believe that his words are misunderstood. We are certain that he was not born before Abraham, and yet his words seem to imply that he existed before the days of Abraham: But these are two different things; the one is evidently false, the other may be true for any thing we know to the contrary. I do not pretend to understand his meaning; but I think there is no impossibility in what he says. Some suppose him to be Jeremias, Elijah, or one of the ancient prophets returned to this world; his age has never been thought inconsistent with that supposition. Now what if we should suppose him to have been an angel, the same with Michael, whom the prophet Daniel calls the first or chief of all the heavenly princes, the great prince which standeth for our people, or our prince by way of distinction from all others; what if that prince should be the angel of God's presence, mentioned by Isaiah, the angel that saved our fathers out of all their afflictions, the angel that appeared to Moses in the burning-bush, the angel that wrestled with Jacob and blessed him, the angel that appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, and that rained down upon Sodom and Gomorrha, brimstone and fire from the Lord of heaven. Let us suppose this person to descend from the heavens, and live in a human body for the space of thirty years upon earth, might he not according to this supposition say with the greatest truth, "Before Abraham was, I am."

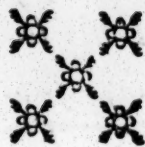
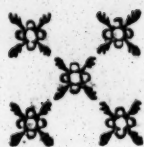
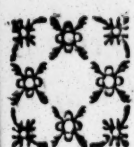
Be that as it will, I dread the thought of offering violence to a person whose power is so great, and whose actions are so good. It is not the multitude I fear, his power exceeds all their united force; he who heals the sick, can also wound the whole, he who raised the dead, can also inflict death. He has already suffered many indignities, his meekness and patience are truly amazing; but who can tell how long these will continue? remember what the prophet Elijah did to the two captains of Ahazeah, and their companies, how he called for fire from heaven and consumed them. Let us beware lest we transgress the commandment of the Lord our God, which saith "touch not mine anointed, "and do my prophets no harm": at these words the sound of wrath, murmur, and confusion rose so high that none could hear his voice, he therefore held his peace, while every eye beheld him with scornful Indignation.

Immediately Caiaphas the high priest rose up, and all were silent. He had listened with a malignant pleasure to the speeches of Annas and Alexander, because they agreed exactly with his own prejudiced inclinations: But Nicodemus and Joseph having removed every objection, with so modest and becoming a freedom, he made no attempt to answer what they said; and therefore having recourse to the maxims of worldly policy, he spoke in the following manner.

Ye rulers of Israel and heads of the house of Jacob, I beg your attention only for a little time,
while

while I state the case fairly before you, for too much time I apprehend has already been spent to little or no purpose. A great many things have been said in opposition to this man, and not a little has been urged in his defence, not only the multitude, but even the members of our Sanhedrim, are divided in their opinions concerning him ; and perhaps we shall never all come to an exact agreement. The question then is not, whether he be a true or a false prophet, whether he be guilty or innocent, no, it is only this, whither the state be in danger or not ? this I think may be answered in the affirmative. For this man, you see is followed by great numbers of people wherever he goes ; whither he be in the villages, or in the cities, or in the wilderness, he is every where attended with an immense retinue. This beyond all dispute will give umbrage to the Romans, who are jealous of their power, and easily alarmed at the first appearance of a revolt. Their apprehensions of danger will be followed with an army, to prevent, or disperse these numerous assemblies. What then will be the consequence ? Will they all of a sudden abandon his person whom they look upon as a great prophet, and even the Messiah himself ? they certainly will not, the high opinion they have of him joined to the hopes of liberty, conquest, and power under his protection, will animate their courage and engage them to resist. War must then be declared against our nation, we are in no condition to defend ourselves

selves and recover our expiring liberty : we must therefore submit with the entire loss of our remaining liberty or be totally destroyed. These consequences will certainly follow if we let him alone. The case is clear, either he or the whole nation must perish. And therefore it is more expedient, that one man, be he never so innocent, should be put to death for the publick safety, than that a whole nation should be ruined upon his account.. I would therefore advise that it may be done with all possible expedition, and for that purpose, let a decree be immediately published, commanding every man, upon the pain of our displeasure, to discover where he is that he may be apprehended. From this decree Nicodemus and Joseph openly dissented, and many others also secretly in their hearts : but the leading part of the Sanhedrim agreed with the chief priest, and confirmed his sentence by the sanction of their authority, their consultations being now ended, they arose, and departed to their respective habitations.



T H E

M E S S I A H.

B O O K III.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

Immediately after the decree of the Sanhedrim Jesus retires to Ephraim ; six days before the passover he returns to Bethany, and is entertained in the house of Simon the leper ; is anointed by Mary. Next day he enters Jerusalem riding upon an ass ; purges the Temple and instructs the people. In the evening he returns to Bethany, and in the morning repairs to the Temple, where he reasons with the chief priests ; baffles the Herodians, Sadducees and Pharisees, returns again to Bethany in the evening. The day following he goes

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to the Temple, warns the people against the Scribes and Pharisees, foretells the destruction of Jerusalem, and his second coming to judgment ; returns to Bethany, sups with his disciples, and washes their feet. The treachery of Judas, and the motives from which he acted. Jesus sends two of his disciples to prepare the passover, comforts them upon the near prospect of his death, and goes to Jerusalem in the evening.

NO sooner was the decree for apprehending Jesus published in the city, than immediately fame with rapid wings, and a thousand tongues dispersed the news over all the adjacent country. Various were the opinions of men upon this occasion ; some were amazed and filled with indignation, at a sentence so rash, impious and unjust ; some whose attachment to the Scribes and Pharisees was exceeding strong, commended the decree with most intemperate zeal, and indecent language ; while others seemed in a state of uncertainty, indulging various conjectures about the event of such an extraordinary affair. As soon as the tidings arrived in Bethany which was in the evening, Jesus and his disciples retired from the dangerous scene to a city called Ephraim upon the borders of the wilderness. He knew very well, that the time predestined for his death was not yet come, and therefore he withdrew into that distant corner to avoid the rage of his implacable enemies. There he spent the time in familiar conversation with his disciples, in acts of

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mercy to the afflicted inhabitants, in frequent prayer and fervent devotion towards God. In this manner was he employed till the passover drew nigh, when all his sufferings were to end in a shameful death. Knowing this, he concealed himself no longer; but in obedience to the will of his heavenly Father, he set out with his disciples on the way to Jerusalem. As they travelled along, they began to remind him of the sentence published by the Sanhedrim, and of the danger to which he might be exposed, should he appear publickly in the city upon that occasion. To this he replied, let no apprehensions of that kind make you afraid, although we ought to consult our own safety as far as it is consistent with the divine will, which you have seen me do upon all occasions hitherto, yet we should never be so much afraid of men, as to distrust the providence of God, or fail in our obedience to him, let the danger be ever so great. Your only business is, to enquire what God commands you to do, in every circumstance of life, and to do that with integrity and resolution, never troubling yourselves about the event: but leaving that to the divine providence who directs all things in such a manner that they shall work together for good to them that love him. By the law of Moses we ought gratefully to commemorate Israel's redemption from the land of Egypt, and the house of bondage; we may indeed be exposed to danger by doing so at this time, when the chief priests and elders have determined to apprehend, and put

me to death ; yea, I know and am assured, that they will treat me in this manner. I have frequently told you, and now I tell you again, that all things which the Prophets have written concerning me, will soon be accomplished ; for at the ensuing passover, the Jews will apprehend me, they will condemn, insult, and abuse me in the most spiteful manner, deliver me into the hands of the Gentiles, who will scourge and crucify me as an impostor ; but after three days I will rise again from the dead. I am not ignorant of the danger to which I will be exposed, nor am I unwilling to suffer these things in obedience to my heavenly Father.

At these words the disciples were strangely surprized, and dejected, and although he had expressed himself in the plainest language, yet being so inconsistent with their confirmed prejudices ; they could not understand his meaning. And therefore after a short silence spent in grief and perplexity, Peter said to him, Lord, I am at a loss to understand your meaning, for I hope none of these things you have mentioned will ever come to pass in the obvious sense of the words, for they seem to be inconsistent with the ancient Prophets, and repugnant to all our expectations. I doubt not the wicked intentions of your enemies, but it becomes you to blast their designs, or to avoid the effects of their ill grounded malice. This I am sure you can easily do, and you have a right to do so.

At these words, Jesus turning about, looked on Peter, with a mixture of pity and indignation: you think, said he, that you have given me a friendly advice; but you are very much mistaken, you have acted the part of an adversary, recommending disobedience to the will of God, who intends by my death to establish a kingdom of truth and righteousness. Of this you seem to have no just apprehension; you look for a worldly kingdom, and fondly imagine, that I will reign over the Jews, and over all nations in the pomp and splendor of an earthly king. It is neither my safety, nor the glory of God you have chiefly in view, but the gratification of your own ambitious desires, and expectations. You must however lay these aside, and look for the exact and literal accomplishment of my words.

After this rebuke, they followed him in silence, reflecting with sorrow, terror, and disappointment upon what he had told them, till nigh the evening when they arrived in Bethany, at the house of Simon the leper, who received them with a joyful hospitality. There an elegant supper was immediately prepared for the entertainment of such an honourable guest. In the meantime Jesus conversed with the company upon various subjects, equally pleasant and improving: but Lazarus, who together with his two sisters, lodged in the same house; finding a convenient opportunity, thought proper to inform Jesus, that he had frequently reflected upon the state of the dead, from which he had obtained such a wonder-

ful deliverance, and finding he could not remember any thing which passed during that time, he was inclined to think, that it was a state of absolute insensibility, without thought, action or enjoyment, and that the prospect of entering into such a state again, filled his mind with a disagreeable melancholy.

To this Jesus replied, you ought not to conclude, that death is either a suspension, or an extinction of all thought and activity, because you have no remembrance of any thing that passed in your mind during that time for if you reflect upon your past life, you will be able to remember but a small share of the innumerable thoughts, and actions, in which you have certainly been engaged. To think and act is one thing, to remember your thoughts and actions is another; the state of the dead is very different from that of the living, and it is all together improper that you should have any remembrance of what passed in that invisible world. The wisdom and goodness of God evidently appear from what he reveals to men in this life, and you may safely believe, that he is no less wise and good to men, in concealing many things from their present view, whatever is useful he has made abundantly clear; but whatever is either useless, or injurious to men in their present state, these hath he hid from the eyes of all living; and therefore lay aside all such useless enquiries concerning the state of souls departed, and rest satisfied in this, that death will not be the end of your existence, that there is
another

another world, where every one shall be happy or miserable, according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil. Here the conversation ended, for supper came in, and all sat down to the welcome entertainment. Here was abundance without luxury, friendship without dissimulation, truth without detraction, temperance without austerity ; and religion without hypocrisy, one only must be excepted, for while Mary who attended the company, and stood behind Jesus listened with a pleasing admiration to all he said, in a sudden transport of the purest love, and most grateful affection, she poured a vial of the most precious essence upon his head and feet, and wiped them with her hair, which hung in graceful but unadorned ringlets down her shoulders. This Judas observed with a look of disappointed avarice, and after pausing a while, he said, this is certainly a piece of the most unnecessary extravagance, for that ointment of so great value, might have been sold at a high price, and given to relieve the poor. This was only a vile pretence, for he had no regard to the poor ; but being a man of insatiable covetousness, and purse bearer to Jesus and his disciples, he was offended because the ointment was not sold, and put into his possession, that he might have applied some of it to his own private use, as he had frequently done. All this was known perfectly well to his Master, who replied with great mildness, and good nature, Blame her not for what she has done, she deserves to be commended, it is a mark

of her kind affection and grateful disposition to me, by honouring me in this manner before my death ; which I assure you is not far off ; for this is the last anointing I shall ever receive before my burial ; this precious ointment she would readily bestow upon my dead body, as a token of respect, and I cannot think you would complain of her for manifesting it upon that occasion : and as to the poor, for whom you express so much concern, you will always have them with you, and you can never want opportunities of relieving them, if you be disposed to do it ; but in a little time, you will be put to no more expences on my account, and therefore you ought not to complain.

This rebuke Judas heard with a sullen silence, and all the rest of the company with a sorrowful surprize, for it seemed very strange to them, that he could speak in such a positive manner concerning an event so dismal and unexpected, and with a mind so calm and undisturbed. The time of rest now approaching, they kneeled down, while he by fervent prayer and thanksgiving, committed himself and his friends to the divine protection, after which they all retired to enjoy the blessing of soft repose.

Now the chearful dawn ushered in the day, when all awoke and performed their wonted devotions. Within a short time a multitude arrives from Jerusalem ; these had got intelligence the evening before that Jesus was in Bethany, and prompted by a strong curiosity of seeing him and Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead, they

they assembled in great numbers, each enquiring of his acquaintance, into the particular circumstances of this extraordinary fact, and beholding with admiration these two persons, of whom they had heard such wonderful reports. Every thing being confirmed by the testimony of so many witnesses of undoubted veracity, they were fully persuaded that he was the long expected Messiah: But so great was the obstinacy of the chief priests and Pharisees, that in the morning when they observed so many going to see Lazarus, they resolved to put him to death also, because upon his account numbers daily deserted their party, and believed on Jesus.

Now when the multitude understood, that he intended to go that day to the city, they waited his departure, along with many more, who were then on their journey from different parts, to attend the feast of unleavened bread. As soon therefore as he set out from Bethany, they assembled in a body, and followed him on the way. When he came in view of Bethphage, a village in Mount Olivet belonging to the priests, knowing that the time of his sufferings was at hand, he intended no longer to conceal his real dignity, nor to avoid the malice of his enemies; therefore, resolving to enter the city, in meek and lowly Majesty as the Prophets had foretold, he ordered two of his disciples to go before him into the village, “ where, said he, as soon as you enter, you will find an ass, with a colt, tied at the door, on which no man ever yet rode,

“ loose them, and bring them to me, and if the
“ owner shall enquire what you mean by doing
“ so, tell him that the Lord hath need of him,
“ and immediately he will consent.” Accord-
ingly they departed, while the multitude waited
with impatience to see the event. In a little time
they returned with the ass and colt, having found
every circumstance just as he had told them. At
which the people were surprized, wondering how
he could foresee circumstances so minute, and
things so exactly, at a distance. This confirmed
them so much the more in their opinion that he
was the Messiah. Now some of them having
spread their garments on the colt, he mounted
and rode along the way, in humble and peaceful
majesty, as kings and righteous men had done be-
fore, in the days of ancient simplicity. No rat-
tling chariot nor prancing steed attend his train,
no sounding clarion, nor armed throng, no gaudy
pomp nor splendor of terrestrial pride, no vain
procession, nor glittering show did he affect ; like
empty mortals proud of being seen, admired,
and feared by gazing multitudes. Tho’ divinely
great, with humble dignity, he rides along, while
thousands pouring from the city meet him on the
way. In testimony of their homage, many spread
their garments on the road where he passed, and
others cut down branches of palm trees, and
strewed them on the way before him ; as they
used to do at a solemn festival, or the triumphant
entrance of a mighty prince. In the mean time,
the numerous procession behind and before, filled
with

with joyful admiration, cried aloud, "Hosanna
"to the son of David, God prosper the king-
"dom of the Messiah, blessed is he that cometh
"in the name of the Lord, behold he cometh to
"heal, instruct, and govern the chosen race,
"glory, peace, and endless power attend our
"mighty King." The joyful sound reecho'd
from the hills, and songs triumphant pierced the
distant skies. At this time some of the Pharisees
being present, moved with envy, and extremely
offended at the honour done to Jesus by the mul-
titude, while they dreaded the loss of their own
authority, requested him that he would rebuke his
disciples, and not suffer them to make such an
indecent noise. By no means, said Jesus, for
since you who ought to shew forth the praises of
God with joyful hearts, through envy and malice
refuse to do it; it is very proper that others
should be permitted to perform such a reasonable
service; and truly if these should forbear, God
would even work a miracle, to raise up others to
glorify his name, rather than silence should be
kept upon such an extraordinary occasion. By
this time they had got to the foot of Mount
Olivet, where they had a full view of the city;
here he stopt for a little time, and while the
multitude gazed upon him with expectation, he
looked earnestly upon Jerusalem; he groaned, the
tears began to flow; at length in mournful strains
he lifted up his voice, and said,

O city of the living God! once pure, O sa-
cred Salem! once thy Lord's delight, but now
abhorred

abhorred for thy iniquities ; O that thou hadst been so wise and happy, as to have considered even now, in the last extremity, the tender and repeated invitations of divine mercy ! But alas it is too late ; for now thy day is near an end, thy sun declines, and soon will set in blood ; I see the time, the awful time draws nigh, when lo, thine enemies shall come in hostile arms, the Roman armies shall approach thy walls, I see their trenches cast about thee, and hem thee in on every side, on all thy bulwarks their battering engines play ; death rides in triumph through thy streets, and in thy Temple stands his bloody throne ; no flight without, no safety found within, no house nor walls to shield thee from thy foe : Thy doom is pass'd, the sentence is gone forth, it's seal'd in heaven, and soon shall be fulfill'd, unnumber'd crimes hang o'er thy destin'd head, and grace despis'd brings on thy dreadful fate. In this manner did he lament the approaching desolation of his implacable enemies.

While he passed through the Valley of Jehoshaphat the multitude attended him in mournful silence, reflecting upon this awful prediction. At length he crossed the brook Cedron, and passing by the fountain of Shilo, he entered the city with all his retinue. The inhabitants were surprised at a procession so numerous ; but when they were informed that Jesus of Nazareth, the Prophet of Galilee was now arrived, they received him with great joy. In the mean time, the chief priests and Pharisees moved with envy and
rage,

rage, said one to another ; dont you see the danger now ? the more we oppose him, the more his authority encreases with the people ; other measures must be taken, and our designs speedily executed ; for if we suffer him to go on at this rate, in a little time the whole nation will run after him.

As soon as he had entered the city he alighted, and went directly to the Temple to instruct the people : But when he had entered the court of the Gentiles, which was appointed for proselytes to worship in, he found it most grossly perverted from its original intention, and turned into a public market, where avarice practised her various arts of deceit. There, were abundance of stalls for exchanging of money, persons who sold cattle, cloves, and the like ; who sat there under pretence of having these things near at hand, for the convenience of such as came up to sacrifice from distant parts. When he beheld the profanation of that holy place, he was immediately fired with a sacred zeal, and overturning their tables and stalls, he boldly expelled the irreligious owners, telling them at the same time, how intolerable it was, to see the house of God which had been consecrated to the divine worship, turned into a market, and filled with covetousness and extortion. A sacred dread was impressed upon the minds of these guilty men, which joined with a sense of his authority, and their own crimes, made them flee in haste without offering any opposition.

Having

Having thus purged the Temple, a great multitude were assembled about him from every quarter of the city, bringing along with them the diseased of every kind. When he saw them, he beheld their various woes with the most tender sympathy and compassion ; they implored his help, and they obtained it ; for all of a sudden their diseases were healed, and not one afflicted person was found in the whole assembly. Never were people more astonished, never was gratitude more lively, their hearts were filled with joy, and their tongues spake aloud of his praise, for now the voice of acclamation resounded through every court, “ Hosanna to the son of David, blessed “ is he that cometh in the name of the Lord to “ save us, Hosanna in the highest.” In the mean time the chief priests and Pharisees, in the inner court, hearing all these things, raged with envy and malice, saying one to another, What shall we do ? for our last decree is vain, none are willing, and we ourselves dare not apprehend him ; let us try if we can draw him into a snare, or provoke him to say something that will offend the people, and alienate their affections from him ; or if possible, let us extort some declaration from his own mouth that will incense the governor against him, and expose him to the punishment of the Roman laws. But while the chief priests were thus consulting his ruin, not only the multitude of the Jews, but even strangers of an inquisitive and unprejudiced mind, were very desirous to hear, and be acquainted with him. Par-

ticularly

ticularly some Greeks, who came from the borders of Galilee to worship in the outer court of the Temple, these being acquainted with Philip one of the twelve disciples, who lived in Bethsaida in the country of Galilee, earnestly begged of him that they might be introduced into his presence, and have an opportunity of conversing with him. Philip informing Andrew of this, they went together and told their Master ; who thereupon replied, If the Greeks desire to see me, and to hear my instructions, they are welcome, for the time cometh when my power and glory shall be manifested not only to the Jews, but also to all the nations of the world ; this is but a small earnest of the wonderful success, which my doctrine shall obtain in the world after my death. For this you know, that till a grain of wheat be sown and die in the earth, it yields no increase ; but after that, it produces much fruit ; in like manner my future glory and the encrease of my disciples, shall be infinitely greater after my death than at present ; and therefore you must know, that as my kingdom lies beyond the grave, and as I must obtain the possession of it by a variety of sufferings and death, so must ye ; for be assured, that if any man through an immoderate love of this present world, shall choose to preserve his life, by avoiding persecution, or forsaking my religion ; that man shall lose everlasting life in the world to come. But he who is willing to lose his life and all that is dear in this world, for the sake of virtue and religion, shall

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certainly after death, arrive at the possession of eternal glory. And therefore if any man is inclined to be my disciple, he must resolve to follow my example, and be prepared to suffer the worst that may happen for my sake and a good conscience. The apprehension of these things may no doubt fill your minds with terror, nor is it strange, I feel the fears of death, the awful prospect fills my soul with sorrow ; here nature shrinks, O God, support me in that dreadful hour. Then lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, O Father, I resign myself entirely to thy will, let all my sufferings glorify thy name. Immediately an awful voice was heard from the heavens, pronouncing these words, Hitherto have I received glory from all thy actions, and henceforth shall I receive glory from all thy sufferings. Some who heard this voice distinctly, thought an angel spoke to him ; but others who heard it imperfectly, imagined it was the sound of thunder in the sky. While the people were thus surprized, Jesus said to them, This voice you have heard from heaven, came not upon my account, as if I wanted any assurance of my Father's love and affection ; no, it was spoken entirely for your sakes, that ye might have an immediate testimony of my divine commission, and that ye might know that all my future sufferings shall end in the extraordinary manifestation of the divine glory. For now is the time, when the powers of darkness shall be stripped of their dominion ; Satan, the god of this world, who has so long deceived the nations, by holding

them

them in ignorance, superstition, idolatry, and all manner of wickedness, shall soon be divested of his power : For when I am lifted up from the earth, and shall depart this world, then all nations, kindreds, and tongues, and people, shall hear my doctrine, receive my religion, desert their idolatry, and seek for salvation by me alone. At these words some of the Jews replied, What do you mean by departing out of the world, for we are told by the prophets, that when the Messiah cometh, he shall continue for ever, and that his kingdom shall never pass away ; now, if you be the Messiah, as you pretend, why do you talk of leaving the world ? And if you are not the Messiah, why do you assume his title by calling yourself the Son of man, as Daniel describes him ? To this he answered, I have frequently told you who I am, and have given you the most convincing proofs of my divine commission ; but ye have not regarded them ; take heed, therefore, least ye resist the truth, and despise the light which is offered you ; for if ye do, in a little time ye will be left in darkness, be given up to your own corrupt affections, and allowed to wander in ignorance, superstition, and incurable prejudices. Ye pretend to believe in God, while at the same time, ye obstinately reject and oppose my doctrine and miracles, which evidently bear the impressions of divine wisdom and almighty power. I came from heaven to enlighten the world, to remove the gross ignorance, and to reform the abominable wickedness that prevails in it ;

it ; and therefore if any man obstinately rejects my doctrine, or lives in opposition to it ; his present guilt and final condemnation shall be increased to the last degree : Not that I will now pass sentence upon men, or punish them for their inexcusable wickedness ; no, that is not the design of my coming at present ; I am sent to reclaim, and save the world, by all the methods of mildness, gentleness, and love, and to make them capable of everlasting happiness in the world to come. But if these should prove ineffectual, then at my second coming, which will be to judge the world in righteousness, they shall be inexcusable ; for the doctrine I now teach, shall be a witness against them, and their obstinate contempt thereof, shall greatly aggravate their final condemnation. This must certainly be the case, seeing the instructions I deliver, are not of my own invention, but a revelation of the divine will, confirmed by miracles, which none but almighty power can produce.

Having spoken these words, he withdrew from the Temple, as the declining sun drew near the western hills, and along with his disciples returned to Bethany. Various were the effects of his doctrine upon the minds of the Jews, the unprejudiced part of the people admired him, and were fully persuaded that he was the Messiah ; even some of the principal men, and chief rulers, were inclined to the same opinion : But the dread of expulsion from the synagogue, made them hold the truth in unrighteousness ; for being unwilling

ling to suffer the reproachful names of Hereticks and Apostates, choosing rather to enjoy the favour of men, and a good reputation in the world, than the approbation of God and a good conscience, they thought it a more prudent way to conceal their opinions, than to make any profession of them before the world. But the chief priests and Pharisees were inflamed with the highest rage against him, and fully determined at all events to take away his life.

Now early in the morning Jesus awoke from balmy sleep, and having poured out his soul in prayer to God, he set out with his disciples for Jerusalem; but as they passed along, he spied at a little distance, a Fig-tree, whose verdant leaves seemed to promise abundance of fruit; being urged with hunger, he turned aside, and found it barren; having searched every branch to no purpose, at last he said, Thou barren tree, sad emblem of the Jewish nation, be thou likewise an emblem of their fate; henceforth let the power of vegetation cease, let all thy branches wither, and thy roots decay. Scarce had he spoken when the leaves began to fade, and all its vigour died away.

From thence proceeding on his way, he went into the city, and entered the Temple, where a multitude were soon assembled to hear his instructions. In the mean time a number of the priests and elders entered the court where he taught the people. Awed by his presence and the terror of the multitude, they listened for some time

time with great impatience ; at last one of them addressed him in the following words. We have now observed your actions for a considerable time, and to us they seem very unaccountable ; last day you entered the city with an immense multitude of people, who attended you with pomp and noise, as if you were a person of uncommon dignity ; you turned out the merchants who were employed in a trade both lawful and necessary, as if you were the governor of the place ; and you teach here publickly, as if you were appointed to do so by the Sanhedrim ; pray who gave you a commission to act in a manner so extraordinary ? To this he replied, Suffer me to ask you a very plain question, which if you answer me, I will also tell you by whose authority I do these things ; When John the Baptist publickly taught, and baptized the people, did he act by a divine commission ? or was it only a contrivance of his own to deceive the multitude ? Tell me freely what you think. Upon this they retired a little to deliberate an answer, and found themselves involved in a hard dilemma ; for, said they, if we acknowledge the divine commission of John the Baptist, then we condemn ourselves for not regarding the testimony he gave in favour of this man, for if John was a true Prophet, Jesus must be one also : But, on the other hand, if we deny the divine commission of John, and charge him with imposture, we are in danger of being stoned to death by the multitude ; it is better therefore to pretend ignorance, than to give an answer which

which will involve us in one of these difficulties. Accordingly upon their return, they replied, that they could not tell by what authority John preached, and baptized the people. Then said Jesus, neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things ; for seeing ye have resisted the strongest evidence, certainly ye will not regard my simple affirmation. The persons whom ye treat with the greatest contempt, even publicans and heathens, these were fully persuaded that John acted by a divine commission ; they heard his instructions, and they repented of their wickedness : But ye who pretend greater zeal for religion than other men, despised his doctrine ; persevering in your wickedness, and with the most implacable malice setting your selves in opposition to the truth. Ye have acted the same part your fathers did in ancient times ; God raised up wise men and prophets, to instruct and reform them, but in vain, for they despised and persecuted them in every age. Now he has sent his own Son, whom in like manner ye hate and despise, and to fill up the measure of your iniquity, him ye will put to death ; and bring upon yourselves the vengeance of heaven, and the awful curses denounced in the law of Moses ; for in a little time your nations shall be destroyed, and your city burnt with fire. At these words some of the principal Jews cried out, God forbid. They certainly will, said he, for so it is written, “ the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head stone of the corner,” that is
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the Messiah, whom the Jews rejected, shall receive and unite into the Church; the Gentiles, even as the principal corner stone unites and supports the two sides of a building together. Then shall the chosen seed of Israel be cast off for their wickedness, and the Gentile nations become the servants of the living God. At these words the chief priests and Pharisees were so enraged, that had not the terror of the multitude restrained their fury, they would have seized him that moment, and put him to death.

But knowing the danger of such an attempt, they withdrew and consulted among themselves how they might draw him into a snare. For this end, a number of the Pharisees and Herodians entered into a plot, which they expected would either expose him to the indignation of the multitude, or the punishment of the Roman law, and therefore with an appearance of great honour and esteem, they came, and addressed him in the following words. Sir, we are fully persuaded that you are a teacher of the divine law, you explain it truly, and we have reason to believe, that upon every occasion you speak freely, without regarding any person or party, without fear or affection; be pleased therefore to remove a difficulty, which we look upon as matter of very great importance. Is it lawful for the Jews, who are the peculiar people of God, and under his immediate government, to pay tribute to Cæsar, and to submit to the authority of the Romans, or not? Here now, they expected to have him en-

tangled

tangled in the snare, let him answer which way he would : For had he answered in the affirmative, the people who hated the Roman government, would have considered him as an enemy to their religion and liberties ; had he answered in the negative, then the Herodians, who were strongly attached to the interest of Cæsar, would have charged him with sedition, and exposed him to the resentment of the Romans. All this he knew, and therefore said to them. Why do ye attempt to involve me in a snare ? I know your gross dissimulation, and your wicked designs ; nevertheless, shew me the tribute money ; this being done, he looked upon it and said, Whose image and superscription is this ? they answered, It is Cæsars ; Well then, said he, give him what you own to be his due, and submit to his authority as far as it is consistent with the laws of God, and the practice of religion. At this reply they were confounded, and vexed to find themselves so publicly disappointed before the people.

A little time after their departure, came a number of the Sadducees, men of great wealth and power, who immediately began a dispute with him, upon the doctrine of a future state, which they absolutely denied. Sir, said one of them, you must certainly grant, that every opinion in religion which is attended with consequences evidently false and absurd, ought to be rejected ; now this is the case with some of your doctrines, particularly concerning the resurrection or future state. For let us suppose a woman to have been
seven

seven times a widow, married to seven brothers, as the law allows in a certain case, and of which we have known an instance, when this woman dies and enters into a future state, pray tell us, which of the seven brothers shall have her for his wife; they have all an equal right to her, and yet they cannot all have her; this must occasion strange confusion, hatred, and contention in that imaginary state you talk so much about; why then do you teach a doctrine so incredible and absurd? To this he replied, Your argument is founded in gross ignorance, you falsely suppose a future state, to be in every respect like the present, but you are altogether mistaken; you see what havock is made in this world every day by death, and was it not for marriage, the earth would soon be depopulated, and turned into a lonely waste; but in the world to come, there are no diseases, pains, nor any more death, for they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, shall then be delivered from all the inconveniencies of this mortal life; there shall be no marrying, nor bearing of children, because there will be no mortality, nor succession of generations: But like the angels of God, they shall live in the possession of consummate glory, and never ending happiness. You must be very ignorant of the divine power, if you doubt the possibility of such a state, and you must be no less ignorant of the holy scriptures, if you deny its reality; many passages are clear to the purpose, and if you would seriously consider what God

said

said to Moses, at the burning bush, you would find a very convincing proof of what I say; "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." This was several hundred years after their death; the relation, you see, was not dissolved, he was, and is still their God, which he could not be, had they perished soul and body, as you affirm; he is the God only of those who have a real existence, and enjoy life, which is truly the case of all those who depart from this world; for death only destroys the wonderful structure of the human body, while the soul which is of a different substance, enters into another state, and shall at the resurrection be clothed with a body, glorious, refined and immortal. Can you really believe, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob received the full reward of their virtue and piety in this world, where they lived as pilgrims and strangers? No, surely; for God had prepared some better things for them. The desire of immortality is deeply rooted in the human nature, the wise and good in every age have lived and died in the hopes of another world; it is the foundation of Religion and Virtue; the consolation of all who suffer death for righteousness sake; it solves all the difficulties arising from the present state of things, and reconciles men to the divine government. Nothing but conscious guilt, and the terrors of future punishment can induce men to take shelter in the horrors of annihilation; it spreads darkness and confusion over all the works of God,

and the ways of providence ; it is the parent of vice, the nurse of impiety, and the source of everlasting woe. These words were delivered with such mildness and Majesty, that the Sadducees were confounded, and withdrew immediately, in a fretful and discontented silence, while the multitude were astonished, and triumphed in their defeat.

As soon as the Pharisees heard of this, they assembled with an intention to dispute, and perplex him in his doctrine ; accordingly one of them who was a Scribe, or interpreter of the law, asked him which was the most important of all the divine commands ? To this he replied, “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God above all
“ worldly enjoyments, yea and above all created
“ beings. This is the first and most important of
“ all others, and ought to be observed with the
“ greatest fidelity ; the next in dignity and ex-
“ cellence is this, thou shalt love thy neighbour
“ as thyself, and do unto all men, as you would
“ they should do unto you.” In the observation of these two, is contained the substance of all true virtue and religion ; and the great design of Revelation is, to explain and enforce the practice of them. This answer gave full satisfaction to the Scribe, who thereupon replied, You have said what is certainly true, for obedience to God, and good will to all men, are indispensibly necessary, and ought to be preferred above all positive institutions. Well then said Jesus, if these be your real sentiments, you are not far from being one of my disciples, and if you persevere in act-
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ing accordingly, you will be a true member of the Church of God upon earth, and shall at last be admitted into his everlasting kingdom. And now since I have freely answered all your questions, suffer me also to ask one of you. Pray tell me then, of what family do you expect the Messiah will be born? To this one replied, he must be the son of David. Well then, said he, how will you reconcile that, with what is said in Psalm cx. 1. where David by the spirit of inspiration speaketh in this manner, "The Lord said "unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, till "I make thine enemies thy footstool." This ye acknowledge to be spoken of the Messiah; now, therefore, if David thus called the Messiah his Lord, how can he also be his son? Can the same person be both his Superior and Inferior? But the Pharisees being ignorant of the Messiah's real character, could give no answer to this question; and finding themselves so far inferior to him, in extent of understanding, quickness of apprehension, clearness of expression, and force of reasoning, they retired, and ventured no more to tempt him with ensnaring questions.

Now, as the evening drew nigh, he left the city, to avoid the secret plots of his enemies, and returned to Bethany, where he lodged all night. Next morning he repairs to Jerusalem; but while he passed along the way, his disciples were surprized to see the fig-tree, quite withered and dried up from the roots. As soon as they began to talk of it, he said to them, Do

you look upon this as an extraordinary thing? Be assured, that if you firmly believe and trust in the power of God, you shall be able to do greater miracles than this; for if it was necessary to remove the mountains and cast them into the sea, in order to confirm your doctrine, God would immediately do it, at your request; for whatever you shall ask of God, in order to confirm your doctrine and ministry, with assured faith and confidence in the divine power, he will certainly do it; but take heed lest you ask the divine assistance in any bad undertaking, which will not be granted; neither pray with angry and vindictive hearts, for God will not hear you, unless you forgive all the injuries you receive from men.

Now as soon as he entered the city, he went to the Temple, where he began to instruct his disciples in the presence of a great multitude. Beware of the Scribes and Pharisees, said he, for they are obstinate and incorrigible; this I have found by repeated trials; they have often been silenced, but they are never convinced, or however they may be convinced, they never acknowledge their conviction; pride and hypocrisy are their leading passions, to gain a reputation with men, which they ill deserve, is the only point they have in view. But above all things, endeavour ye to obtain the approbation of God. Never claim authority over the consciences of other men, nor submit to the imperious dictates of those who would tyrannize over your faith; remember that ye have no master upon earth but me, to whom
alone

alone ye must answer for your conduct in religious matters. Avoid ambition, nor aspire after worldly power and dignity, for pride is always attended with contempt, and honour with humility. Wo unto the Scribes and Pharisees, for they will neither enter into the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor suffer other men to enter in. They are cruel and rapacious, rigorous and oppressive to all who fall into their hands, especially to the widow and fatherless, and all who are unable to detect their frauds, or oppose their violence; and what must needs aggravate their guilt, and hasten their condemnation, is this, that their injustice, covetousness, and oppression, are all covered over, with a pretence of uncommon sanctity and devotion. An immoderate zeal for their own party, has extinguished all regards for other men, whom they treat with the highest contempt. Their strength is exhausted in making proselytes to their own opinions, while they are at no pains in reforming men from their wickedness. Their religion consists wholly in ceremonies, and their lives are stained with the blackest enormities. None can pretend a higher veneration for the ancient Prophets, while at the same time they are animated by the spirit of persecution, and tread in the footsteps of their incorrigible ancestors. For these crimes shall the vengeance of heaven come speedily upon the men of this generation. O Jerusalem! how dreadful is thy guilt! how often hast thou persecuted the Prophets, and murdered them who

sought for thy recovery. How often would I have gathered thy children, with the most tender affection, even as a hen gathereth her brood under the protection of her wings, but alas ye would not. The tender invitations of divine mercy and goodness have been repeated in every age, but in vain, for thou hast despised them all, with the most obstinate impenitence. Behold, now, the day of mercy is near an end, this bloody city shall be turned into ruins, and this splendid Temple consumed in the flames ; the time is at hand, nor shall ye henceforth see my face again, till ye be forced to own me the true Messiah, and the Son of God with power.

At these words he departed, leaving the multitude strangely moved with a variety of passions. Some who were attached to the Pharisees, were filled with indignation at the freedom with which he rebuked their crimes ; others admired his resolution, and approved of all he said, while many were moved with terror at his awful predictions, or afflicted with sorrow at his last farewell ; for after this, he never appeared to them as a teacher ; conversing only in private with his disciples, to whom he expressed his mind with the utmost freedom ; for while they withdrew from the Temple, one of them reflecting upon his last words to the people, desired him to observe the beauty, grandeur, and magnificence of the building, insinuating at the same time, what pity it were, if such a glorious structure should be so miserably destroyed.

Upon

Upon this he replied, Do you admire these things, and view them with pity? Be assured, that when God is excluded from mens hearts, he pays no regard to their most stately Temples, and therefore I tell you again, that within a few years, this building shall be totally destroyed, and not one stone left upon another, that shall not be thrown down. These words only encreased their sorrow, and they followed him in mournful silence, till they came to mount Olivet, where he sat down to rest. Here, while these awful impressions remained on their hearts, Simon Peter, moved by a curiosity natural to the human mind, addressed his Master in the following words. Lord, you have often foretold the destruction of this city, and the desolation of Judea; we suppose your kingdom will then be established, and all your enemies put under your feet; be pleased to inform us, when this shall come to pass, and by what signs we may know when the time is at hand?

To this Jesus replied, Beware, least any man deceive you with false notions of my kingdom, or of the manner in which it shall be established; for several impostors will arise, each of them pretending to be the Messiah, sent with a divine commission, to deliver the Jews from the power of the Romans, and to set up an earthly kingdom in Judea. Then many who have rejected me, shall follow the rebellious standards of these impious men; this shall occasion great confusion, tumults and civil wars; for the Jews shall be di-

vided among themselves, with implacable fury and hatred, even at the very time when they are attacked by their common enemy the Romans: Then pestilence and famine shall invade the city, terror and death shall run through every corner, fearful visions shall appear in the heavens, and terrible omens of desolation be seen on earth. But in the midst of these calamities, be not afraid, neither let any thing shake your integrity; for the Jews will revile you, and persecute you for my sake; they will bring you before their magistrates as criminals, and scourge you in their synagogues as vile apostates: They will confine you in their prisons; put some of you to death, and afflict others with all imaginable cruelty. Be not afraid at the apprehension of these things, for I will inspire you with such wisdom and resolution, that none of your adversaries shall be able to withstand you. Yea, the more ye are opposed, the more shall your doctrines prevail, in so much that your voice shall go through all the earth, and your words to the end of the world. But go where you will, you must lay your account with persecution, for ye shall be hated of all nations for my names sake; nevertheless, be assured, that not a hair of your head shall perish in the destruction of Jerusalem. And as for the signs which shall immediately precede that desolation; observe, whenever ye behold the city besieged by the Roman army, which Daniel calls "the abomination that maketh desolate" then be assured, that the final destruction of the Jewish nation is at hand.

And

And therefore whoever is in the open country, let him flee immediately to the mountains ; let no man tarry in hopes of saving his goods, but escape with all possible expedition, as Lot did out of Sodom, without so much as looking behind him. For that shall be a day of awful and sudden vengeance, a day wherein all the judgments threatned by the ancient Prophets shall be fully executed upon this wicked and incorrigible nation. Wo unto them who are unable to make their escape in that day, for no kingdom under heaven did ever yet suffer such a complication of calamities, as shall in a little time fall upon the Jewish nation : for the greatest part of them shall perish by famine and pestilence, by mutual slaughter and sedition among themselves, and by the sword of the victorious Romans, who shall carry the remnant into captivity, and scatter them among all nations. The city shall be razed to its foundations, and the land of promise remain in the possession of the Gentiles for a long time, till the Jews shall confess my name, submit to my authority, and joyfully receive me, as the only hope of Israel. Thus have I informed you of the signs which shall precede the destruction of Jerusalem, when their Religion and Government shall be totally dissolved. Then shall it evidently appear to the impartial and unprejudiced world, that I am the true Messiah, the King of Israel, and the Son of God with power : Then shall the Gospel be preached among all nations, and mine Elect be gathered from the four corners

of the earth. The time is at hand, for there are some of this generation who shall live to see the accomplishment of all these things.

That desolation shall be an emblem of the last Judgment, and the precise time when both these shall happen, is a profound secret, hid from angels and men. Watch therefore, and be always ready, lest national destruction, personal death, or the final judgment should come upon you unawares. Be ye therefore like faithful servants, waiting patiently, and labouring diligently 'till the return of their Lord ; for be assured, after the revolution of certain ages I will return again to this world, not in the meanness and poverty of my present state, to be despised, and persecuted as now ye see ; but in the glory of my Father, brighter than the sun, clothed in the splendor of divine majesty, innumerable hosts of angels shall then minister unto me, ten thousand times ten thousand shall stand before me. Then shall the awful trumpet sound, whose tremendous voice shall awaken the dead, and terrify the inhabitants of this world ; my servants shall then arise, clothed in shining robes of immortality, and those who shall be alive in that day, shall in a moment be changed, as once some of you saw me on the mount when Moses and Elias conversed with me. Ten thousand legions of angels shall then descend and gather all my Saints from every corner of the earth, and as Elijah once in a chariot of fire ascended from the earth, so shall they ascend the clouds, and in radiant circles stand around my throne :

throne : While the last generation of wicked men shall be stunned with horror, and seek for shelter in every dark retreat ; but no refuge shall be found, for at my command the impious dead of every age, shall arise from the close confinement of the grave, and from the bottom of the raging deep ; terror shall sit on every countenance, and faltering tongues, and trembling joints, betray the unnutterable anguish of their guilty hearts. Then shall ye discern between the righteous and the wicked, between them that feared God, and them who feared him not ; then shall every action be weighed in an equal balance, and the divine law be the standard of the final judgment ; then will I render unto every one according to his works, whether they be good or evil. No sooner shall the awful sentence be passed, than the dissolution of this world is at hand ; for at my word, the lurking seeds of fire shall burst in flames from all the earth below ; the boiling ocean shall ascend in vapour, and burning mountains melt into the plains ; the lightnings flash from every cloud, and awful thunders roar along the heavens, the elements on fire shall melt with fervent heat, and every thing that lives and breathes expire. Then utter darkness shall involve that dreary, dismal world, where all the race of impious men, and rebel angels shall be confined, to weep and wail their hapless doom, for crimes and follies past, far, far excluded from the Throne of God, banished for ever from that blissful world, where I and all my saints and holy angels shall dwell, in
purest

purest light, in perfect love, and never-ending joy. Be assured all this will come to pass; therefore let the hope of such an unspeakable reward, support you under all the difficulties of this mortal life.

By this time the shadows of the evening were stretched out, he therefore arose, and went over the hill to Bethany, where he abode all night, and the following day passed the time in conversation with his disciples, in acts of piety, and in preparation for his approaching death. When the evening came on, he sat down to supper with his disciples. Upon this occasion he expressed the most tender affection, and the most wonderful condescension, for while they were at meat, he rose from the table, laid by his upper garment, girt himself with a napkin, like a servant waiting at a feast; then pouring water into a bason, he began to wash their feet, and to wipe them with a towel, proceeding in order as they sat at the table. Peter being astonished at such an unparalleled instance of humility, said unto him, Lord, you shall never wash my feet, this is a favour I am utterly unworthy of, and it is infinitely below your dignity to perform such a mean office to your own servants, who ought to attend upon, and obey you in every thing. To this he replied, you do not understand what I mean by this action: Peter still refusing, his Master answered, If you will not submit to be washed by me, you can never be my disciple, nor have any share in the happiness of my kingdom. Then said Peter,

if

if that be so, Lord, wash me all over. There is no necessity for that, said Jesus, for as he who comes out of a bathing-place, hath his whole person clean, except only his feet, so are ye my disciples clean, but not all of you. Having now washed their feet, he put on his upper garment again, and resumed his place at the table.

Now my friends, said he, ye are at a loss to understand the meaning of my conduct; I will therefore inform you: Ye have all confessed me to be your Lord and Master, but that is not sufficient, unless ye obey my commandments, and imitate my example: Here therefore I have proposed a trial of your sincerity, and a test of your obedience. For though I be greater than ye all, yet I have never discovered any thing like pride, or haughty disdain in any of my actions to you, yea I have condescended to perform the meanest offices of kindness and friendship to you my disciples; how much more then, ought ye to behave in the same manner to one another; let your condescension and humility appear to all men, nor be ashamed to do to one another as I have done to you.

I have always treated you like friends and brethren, and might reasonably expect a return of grateful affection; yet how am I afflicted to think, that after all, one of you will betray me; for as David once complained, so may I, "my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who eat of my bread, has lift up his heel against me". At these words they were all surprized, and filled with

with sorrow, every one looking in the countenance of his neighbour, and wondering who it was that could be guilty of so base an action. In the mean time John who sat next his Master, and enjoyed an uncommon share of his affection, at a signal from Peter, enquired with a whisper, who that person was ; to whom he gently replied, it is he to whom I shall give a morsel when I have dipped it ; which he did immediately to Judas, saying at the same time, What you intend to do, do quickly : But none at the table understood his meaning, for they supposed he had only given orders to Judas to purchase some necessary provisions for the approaching feast, or that he should give something to the poor. Accordingly he arose and went out, while Mammon possessed his imagination, and in the lonely night conducted him on the way to Jerufalem. As he passed along, he thus reasoned with himself.

He must certainly be the Messiah, his words and actions do abundantly prove it ; he knows even the secrets of the heart, and is no stranger to my intentions. The multitude have lately published him the Messiah, and yet he declines to assume the sovereign power ; for if the Prophets lie not, he must be our King, “ his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.” The words of Gabriel to his Virgin-mother will certainly come to pass ; “ Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt
“ call

“ call his name Jesus, he shall be great, and
“ shall be called the Son of the highest, and the
“ Lord God shall give unto him the throne of
“ his father David, and he shall reign over the
“ house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom
“ there shall be no end.” Now when these things
are accomplished, we shall be entirely delivered
from the Roman yoke, and exalted to a state of
wealth and prosperity, more glorious and permanent
than any nation ever enjoyed before. In that case,
may not his friends, especially his immediate dis-
ciples and companions, expect to enjoy places of
the highest dignity and power under his auspicious
reign. This much I think he once promised in
these words, “ When the Son of man shall sit
“ upon the throne of his glory ; ye also shall sit
“ upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve
“ tribes of Israel.” All this will certainly come
to pass ; but when or by what means I cannot
yet conjecture. His meekness, patience, and
forbearance, have hitherto been astonishing,
no injuries could provoke him to retaliate, or in-
flict punishment on the offenders : But it is im-
possible he can always bear with such indignities ;
it is true, he has suffered as yet only contempt,
reproach and threatnings ; when personal danger
appeared, he always shunned the fury of his
enemies, and commanded us to do the same. But
should they proceed to violence, or make any
attempt upon his life, no doubt he would act a
different part, for self-defence is always allowable
in a just cause. I am perfectly assured of his in-
nocence,

nocence, and therefore he has a right to defend himself ; and as for his power, who that has seen his miracles can doubt of it ; certainly he who has healed all manner of diseases, with a word of his mouth, or a touch of his hand, can as easily inflict them ; he who has raised the dead to life, can also inflict death ; he who turned the storm into a calm, can also quiet the tumults of the people ; he who restrains the devils, can also set bounds to the persecution of the wicked. If Elijah could destroy the captains of Ahaziah and their companies, certainly a word from him, can blast their power, and wither all their strength, and this must be the case, if once they provoke his indignation too far. The Sanhedrim has lately pulished a decree, ordaining every one to inform against him, that he may be apprehended ; what harm can there be in such an information ? he knows my design, and he seems to approve of it : Now let me consider the consequence. Should I deliver him into their hands, how will he behave ? His cause is good, and his eloquence astonishing ; he has often put his enemies to silence ; some of them he has gained over to his interest already ; possibly he may prevail by his reasoning and miracles ; should they yield to his authority, then all difficulties are over, his kingdom will be established, and the whole nation submit to his government. But supposing the Sanhedrim should resist the strongest evidence, and remain implacable in their resentment, will they dare to offer violence to one, whom the

multitude

multitude admire, and so publicly confess to be the true Messiah, and the King of Israel? No surely, the same cause will produce the same effects, the fear of the people has all along restrained their fury, and must continue to do so; the Rulers therefore must unavoidably submit to a power which they cannot controul. But let me suppose the worst, that is, that the people will either abandon his interest altogether, or join with his enemies, which surely will never be the case, then what must follow? Self preservation, the defence of his friends, and the support of a good cause, will certainly induce him to confound his implacable enemies, and punish their obstinacy with immediate destruction; the terror of his vengeance will make others to submit, and all must receive him for their King. This seems to agree with the words of the Prophet, "kiss ye the son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little; but blessed are all they that put their trust in him." This is the consummation of my hope, for till he be in possession of the royal dignity, we have no prospect of any power, wealth, or honour under him. This action, at first view, may seem base and perfidious; but the end is good, and that may either justify or extenuate the means. I only intend to give him an occasion of exerting his power, and of ascending the throne of his ancestors: I only do what Hushai the Archite did, when he joined in the rebellion of Absalom, that he might the more effectually

effectually promote the interest of David ; and if there should be any crime in it, I have only to confess my fault, and then I am sure he will forgive me.

In this manner deluded by the secret influence of Mammon, he reasoned with himself, till he arrived at the city, and went directly to the Palace of the High Priest, where a number of the chief rulers were assembled. Here they were engaged in deep consultation, about the most prudent means of apprehending Jesus, without exposing themselves to the indignation of the people. In the midst of their perplexity, Judas was admitted, and finding every circumstance agreeable to his wish, he openly proposed, for a valuable consideration, to deliver him into their hands, at a time when none of the people should know, or be able to give him any assistance. This offer was heard with great joy, and a promise made to him of thirty shekles of silver, as a reward for his service. This he considered as a trifling sum, but in hopes of obtaining an immense fortune by the destruction of the rulers, and the advancement of his Master, he agreed to deliver him into their hands, in a place and time most convenient for their purpose.

In this manner Judas was employed, while his Master was engaged in comforting the rest of his disciples. For as soon as this perfidious man had gone out, he said to them, Now, my friends, in a very little time shall the glory of God be manifested in my death, as remarkably as it has been in my life,

life, for as I have intended the honour of God in all my actions, so will I do in my last sufferings, and I am assured that he will support me under them, and raise me in a little time, to inconceivable glory and dignity, over all things in heaven and on earth. No doubt ye will be sorry at my departure: But let not your trust in God, nor your hopes in me be ever shaken or subverted, for what I promise shall certainly be accomplished. Behold the spacious earth, and starry heavens, the immense creation extended far beyond your present view, yea far beyond the utmost stretch of your imaginations; this is my Father's house, built in the deep centre of unbounded space; ten thousand thousand worlds unseen, and unconceived, are only so many different apartments in this grand and magnificent habitation; there his intelligent offspring, an innumerable family, and of different orders, hold their various abodes, in regions of purest light, and everlasting love. This little world in which you dwell is one of these mansions, it is only a nursery for the infant race of mortal men; where they must be trained up for a state of more exalted perfection, in the unseen worlds above. From this I must soon depart, but be not grieved, for it is on your account I am going away, and with no other design, than to prepare a more convenient habitation for you, and when I have done that, I will return again to conduct you thither, where we shall dwell together, in everlasting peace and joy, where sin and death shall be no more. In
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the mean time, during my absence, be sure that ye love one another, as sincerely as I have loved you ; for your sakes I have undergone all manner of hardships, and for your sakes I am about to suffer death. This is my commandment, it is the fundamental law of my kingdom, and by your obedience to this, I intend ye should be known from all other men, and manifest to all the world the excellence of my religion. In a little time the men of this world shall see me no more ; but it shall not be so with you, for I will see you again very soon, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy shall no man take from you. The Jews I know will be glad at my death, and ye shall be grieved, but your grief shall not continue long : for within three days I will rise again and meet you in Galilee. Remember now what I say, for my words shall never fail. I consider your present sorrow, as a testimony of your love to me, but ye must give more substantial proofs of its ardour and sincerity in my absence ; ye must obey me in every thing I command you ; he that loves me will do so, and he who deliberately breaks my commandments has certainly no true regard for me, let him profess what he will. These things I have told you, lest your minds should be too much dejected at the apprehensions of my approaching death, and that when it happens, ye may remember how exactly I have told you every circumstance as they came to pass. I have only one thing

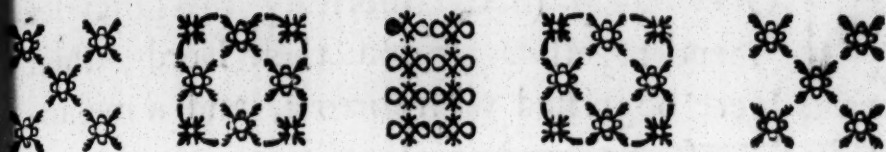
thing more to observe for your consolation. When I am gone, the Holy Spirit will descend in my stead ; he will comfort you in all tribulations, assist you in all difficulties, teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance whatever I have spoken to you. But now it is late, retire to your rest, for to-morrow's toil may demand some short repose. Accordingly they withdrew, and obtained a truce from sorrow in the peaceful slumbers of the night.





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THE MESSIAH.

BOOK IV.

THE ARGUMENT.

Jesus celebrates the Passover with his Disciples ; institutes his last Supper, and gives them proper instructions suitable to the occasion ; his prayer for himself and them. He retires to Gethsemane ; Satan appears and tempts him to despair, but is immediately repelled with terror. His agony in the garden ; Gabriel appears and strengthens him ; Judas with a band of men apprehends him ; his trial in the palace of the High Priest. Peter denies him, and immediately repents.

NOW

NOW early in the morning the Disciples meet together around their Lord ; their hearts were oppressed with sorrow, and a melancholy sadness appeared on every face ; for the impressions of his last night's conversation remained strongly on their minds ; while he conversed with them upon the business of the day, they took an occasion from thence to enquire in what house he intended to eat the Passover. In answer to this, he ordered Peter and John, to go immediately into the city, where, said he, as soon as ye have entered, ye will see a man carrying a pitcher of water ; follow him into the house where he goes, and enquire for the guest-chamber where I may eat the Passover with my Disciples ; and immediately without any hesitation the master of the house will conduct you to a large chamber well furnished : let all necessary preparations be made there. Accordingly away they went, and when they entered into the city they found every circumstance agreeable to the divine foresight of their Master. Now every thing being accomplished according to the law of Moses, Jesus and the rest of the Disciples arrived in the evening at the appointed house, and while they sat around the table feasting on the sacrifice, he thus began.

My dearest friends, I have longed with a fervent desire to eat this Passover with you, before I suffer death. The design of the Institution is well known to the Jewish Nation ; the occasion of its appointment was so interesting, that in
every

every age it has been held in sacred remembrance by all the chosen seed of Jacob. How dreadful was that night, when death rode triumphant through the land of Egypt ; in every house the dismal cry was heard, and all the first-born seed of man and beast were slain at once. But the divine mercy spared our fathers in the land of Goshen, and passed over their habitations sprinkled with the blood of the Paschal Lamb, and thus, delivered from bondage, and redeemed from death ; they have in every age, with a grateful remembrance, renewed the sacred rite. This Passover is a Type of my Death, which shall deliver the world from worse than Egyptian bondage ; for by my blood shall thousands be redeemed from the servitude of sin, the tyranny of Satan, and everlasting destruction in the world to come. Then taking a cup of wine, as was usual upon that occasion, he gave thanks over it, and said to them, Take and drink this, as the last Paschal commemoration which we shall ever celebrate in this manner ; from henceforth will I drink no more of the fruit of the vine, till my kingdom be established, and the shadows of the ceremonial law fully accomplished. I have once told you before, and now I tell you again, that one of you will betray me into the hands of my implacable enemies ; how am I distressed to think of such ungrateful treatment from one who professes to be my friend. At these words they were exceedingly dejected, wondering who he was that could be guilty of so base and enormous a

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crime ;

crime ; and therefore after a little pause, they began to say, one by one, Lord, is it I ? To which he answered, It is one that eateth out of the same dish with me. Then Judas, who had said nothing as yet, like the rest of the Disciples, put the question. Lord, is it I you mean ? You are the very man, said he, for I must indeed suffer according to the will of God, and the writings of the Prophets ; but wo unto that man who shall betray me, it had been good for him, if he had perished from the womb, or had given up the ghost as soon as he was born. At these words Judas rose from the table, and urged by the power of Mammon, he withdrew in haste, and went to the palace of the high priest, desiring that with all possible expedition a sufficient body of men might be assembled, in order to apprehend the man whom he had agreed to deliver into their hands.

No sooner had Judas gone out, than Jesus, without taking any further notice of the base designs that were forming against him ; addressed his Disciples in the following words. Now, my friends, having with grateful hearts, according to the divine appointment, celebrated the memorial of Israel's redemption from the land of Egypt, I shall appoint in its place the memorial of my own death, an event far more interesting than the former. With these words he lifted in his hands a piece of bread, he gave thanks to God, brake it in pieces, and gave to them, saying, Eat this as an emblem of my body which is broken for
you ;

you ; I am the bread of life which came down from heaven, my doctrine and example, my sufferings and death, are the means of your Salvation, and therefore when ye eat of this bread, if ye seriously meditate upon these things, and live accordingly, your souls will be fed and nourished to eternal life. After this he filled the cup with wine, and presenting it to them, he said, Drink ye all of this, it is the memorial of my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many ; by this shall the everlasting covenant be sealed, and the divine mercy be conveyed to men in every future period of the world. This I command you, and all my Disciples to observe in every age, as a sacred memorial of my death, till I come the second time for the eternal redemption of my people. And seeing I must soon leave this world, it becomes you my Disciples, to lay aside all immoderate attachment to the perishing enjoyments of this life. Ye have often contended for superiority, and disputed who shall be the greatest in my kingdom ; I behold with compassion the same folly still working in your hearts. Be wiser for the time to come, entertain no vain hopes of wealth, and power among men ; never contend about them ; in the kingdoms of this world ye will often see men of the worst characters possessed of the highest dignities ; pride, covetousness, and ambition, supported with fraud, and strengthened by violence ; these and the like are too often the steps of their exaltation. Such is the course of this world ; but in my kingdom it

shall not be so ; there, every one shall rise to everlasting honour and glory, in exact proportion to his real worth and integrity. The meek, the lowly, and the generous mind shall be advanced above all others. Learn from my example, ye have seen in what manner I have lived in this world ; I never aspired to power and dominion, I never sought after riches, nor affected the vain pomp and splendor of human life ; my work consisted in doing the will of God, and promoting the happiness of men. From these I derive the highest pleasure, and in them I find my greatest glory. See what reception I have met with from the world, how much have I been despised and rejected of men ? How then can ye entertain the hopes of better treatment ? Have I endured contempt, and reproach, and do ye expect to meet with honour and esteem ? Have I lived in poverty, and do ye hope for power and dominion ? Have I endured the severest strokes of adversity, and can ye flatter yourselves with the vain hopes of lasting prosperity ? No, ye must look for contempt, poverty, and persecution ; I warn you fairly to be upon your guard, and arm yourselves with fortitude and resolution. The time is at hand, the hour of danger is fast approaching, the dismal scene draws nigh ; the fear of death will soon arise in every heart ; then shall ye be scattered every man to his own, while I, your Lord, shall be left alone amidst surrounding foes ; yet even then, I shall not be alone, for my Father in whom I trust, shall be with me, and

and support me. At these words Peter replied, with a rash and inconsiderate zeal, agreeable to the natural warmth of his temper ; Lord, fear not our resolution in the time of danger ; at least for my part, I am fully determined, that tho' all men should forsake thee, yet I never will ; in like manner said all the rest. But Jesus knowing perfectly their different characters, together with the temptations which were approaching, told them, that however sincere their present resolutions might be, yet they were unacquainted with their own weakness, and could not absolutely determine, how they would act when the trial came. Then turning to Peter, he said, Beware Simon, least the violence of your temper, too apt to over-run the calm deliberations of reason, should hurry you into some dangerous temptation. For I now tell you, that Satan has a particular design against you, and intends to try you severely ; but I have prayed for you, least your faith should entirely fail, and my prayer shall not be in vain ; only remember, that when you are converted, you must strengthen your brethren, and endeavour to support their desponding spirits. To this Peter again replied, without either suspecting his own weakness, or regarding his master's admonitions ; Lord, go where you will, I am resolved to go with you ; neither imprisonment, nor death shall ever separate me from your company. Alas, Peter, said his Master, you are too presumptuous, your confidence will occasion your fall ; for now I tell you, that before

the dawning of the day, yea before the cock crow twice, you will no less than three times deny that ever you knew me. For now the dark, the dismal hour is at hand, a sudden tempest rises from the deeps of hell, the powers of darkness and wicked men combined, will vent their utmost rage and malice against me, and to all outward appearance will seem to prevail for a time; then sorrow and consternation shall fill your hearts, and ye will be tempted to look on me, and my cause as desperate and abandoned; but be not dismayed, let faith and hope support your drooping spirits; for in due time, I'll break the bands of death, and arise triumphant from the grave. Having said these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and prayed in the following manner:

O my God and Father, the hour is come, support me in this my great distress, that by my death I may advance thy glory, and accomplish the redemption of thy people. I willingly submit to the severest suffering, that the world may be brought to the knowledge of thee, the only true God, and of me, thy well-beloved Son, whom thou hast sent from the heavens. I have honoured thee in all my actions, and have finished the work thou gavest me to do. Support me under all my sorrows, raise me in triumph from the grave, and exalt me to the possession of that glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have faithfully declared thy will to my Disciples, and they have sincerely believed in me. And now O Father, I pray in their behalf, not for the impenitent,

nitent, and incorrigible men of this world, who despise the light, and shun the paths of everlasting life. O preserve them when I am gone, support them in the cause of truth and righteousness, and let them be united in faith and love, even as thou and I are one. Hitherto have I preserved them by my doctrine and example; none of them have deserted me, but that perfidious wretch who has now joined my foes. I know the world will hate, and persecute them for my sake; but let thy power defend them, thy wisdom guide them, and thy good Spirit assist them in publishing the Gospel among the Nations. In like manner, O Father, I pray in behalf of all those who shall be converted by their ministry, that as I am in thee, and thou in me, so they may be all united to me and one another in the indissoluble bands of pure faith and holy love: That by the integrity of their lives, and their mutual love to one another, and towards all men, the world may see the divine authority and excellence of their religion; and when these shall have finished their course in this world, let them be admitted into thine everlasting kingdom, where they may behold my glory, and be partakers of my happiness. O righteous Father, the wicked men of this world have not known thee, nor are they disposed to obey thy will: But I have known thee, and have faithfully made known thy will to my Disciples, who have chearfully received, and sincerely obeyed it. Therefore will I continue to instruct them, more and more, that they may still arrive at higher

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degrees

degrees of perfection, in order that the love wherewith thou hast distinguished me may reign among them, and they be united to me and one another, in the bonds of pure and perfect love for ever.

These words were expressed with an air of dignity, piety, and resignation, vastly superior to the most animated devotions of the sons of men. When he had done, let us retire, said he, to the wonted place where darkness, silence, and solitude may favour our meditations ; there lies the dismal scene, the awful prelude to a painful and ignominious death ; for the time is at hand when all that has been said by the ancient Prophets must be accomplished. My Father wills that I should now submit, and what he wills I am ready to obey.

Immediately in solemn sadness they all withdrew from the house, while lowering clouds obscured the face of heaven, no twinkling star, nor silver moon appeared ; all nature buried in the shades of night, lay wrapt in silence : All rest in peace, all but the Son of God, who found no rest ; neither did his weary friends, who were now oppressed with sorrow, toil and anxious fear ; nor could his enemies find rest, for now impelled by Satan, tortured with envy, and roused to a degree of madness with infernal spite, they were ready in the palace of Caiaphas waiting with great impatience till Judas would appear to give the promised information. Now had the Messiah passed the gates, and crossed the gentle stream, where

where towering cedars encreased the shades of night ; when in the following words he thus bespoke his melancholy Disciples, Beware, least sudden danger should overcome your resolution ; this I know will be the case, for so it is written, “ I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall “ be scattered” your boasted courage will soon fail, and all of you will be offended because of me this night. To this they made no reply, for the apprehensions of danger were every moment encreasing ; a mournful silence prevailed for some time, till they arrived at Gethsemene, a vineyard near the foot of mount Olivet, where frequently he had passed the night, in solitary prayer and contemplation. As soon as they had entered the garden, he said to them, Remain now in this place, watch and be upon your guard against whatever may happen ; pray fervently that God may strengthen you against the approaching danger. Here eight of the Disciples were placed, while Jesus, together with Peter, James, and John, advanced a little further, to whom in mournful accents he thus revealed the dreadful agonies of his mind : Alas, my dearest friends, little do ye know what I suffer, the dreary prospect lies before my view, surrounding terrors of ungodly men, the spiteful rage of infernal hosts, and the tormenting pangs of an ignominious death ; all these, and much more than these, oppress my weary soul, and sink me to the dust. Abide ye here and watch, while I retire a little further. Accordingly he advanced to a distant

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harbour,

arbour, whose intermingled branches and thick-arched roof, doubled the horrors of that awful night. Here he lies prostrate on the cold damp earth, while dismal scenes of approaching woe, passed in rapid succession through his troubled mind. Here Satan meant to plunge him in despair ; for lo ! amidst the black and gloomy shade, he arose in a form more terrible than imagination yet conceived, and with a voice more hideous than ever addressed the human ear, he thus began :

O Son of God, is this the end of all thy painful labours for the chosen race ! Three years and more, have I beheld thy weary wanderings, thy incessant toil, thy words, and all thine actions full of grace and power. Thy labours are all in vain ; contempt and persecution are the only returns for all thy kindness to them : How justly do they merit thy hatred and indignation ; think of them no more with any kind regard, nor lose thy affections upon such a worthless race of contemptible beings ; rouse all thy aversion, let thy wrath be kindled against the sons of men ; abhor the whole ungrateful kind, and let thy heavy curse fall upon that guilty nation which gave thee birth. All this, and more than this, is the just reward of their crimes, which are not yet compleat : Behold Judas, one of thine own Disciples, in close league with thine implacable enemies, is about to apprehend thee ; the rest of thy friends, are faithless as well as he ; for even now they slumber in profound security, disobedient

obedient to thy orders, and unconcerned about thy sufferings. This moment I beheld thine enemies in close array advancing from the city. Like a thief caught in nocturnal fraud, they will seize thee with impious hands, expect nothing but contempt, and insolent abuse ; I heard their consultations, and now behold thy doom, unpitied and forlorn shalt thou expire upon the cross in agonizing pain. Thus shall thy glory end in sad disgrace, and boasted virtue sink thee to the grave : Forsaken thus by God and all thy friends, what wilt thou do ? Cast hope away, trust neither God nor man, now fly, or fight, or perish in despair.

To this the Son of God replied ; Abhorred Fiend, apostate from the world of bliss, I regard not thy hideous form, thy infernal malice, thy black envenomed rage, against my Father, and me, and all the human race. I know what I must suffer, surrounding sorrows now pour into my soul ; these God permits, nor shalt thou gain by these, for I'll endure them all, in meek submission to his will, and what he wills is always good ; I'll bear them all for wretched men, and worse than these I would endure for them, if worse could be. Thou temptest me to hate the human kind, distrust my Father, and perish in despair. O words infernal ! detested as thyself ; how justly art thou doomed to endless wo. I love the human race, I wish them well, but thou, their deadly foe, wouldst ruin all, and sink them down to hell. If they despise and persecute their friend,

friend, thou art the cause, the first great cause, who led them all astray. Had they but known from whence I came, and who I am, they never would have treated me with such contempt ; but thou perverse, and past recovery, hardened in thy sin, hast no excuse. It is neither in thy power, nor in the power of all my foes, to bring me to the grave, should I incline to save my life. But I am resolved to suffer death, as God intends ; and by my death I'll bruise-thy head, I'll break thy power, and bring redemption to the chosen race. I'll trust in God, for still he is at my right hand, and by his grace I'll conquer all my foes. Therefore be gone, thou base apostate, tempt my wrath no more, least sudden vengeance send thee to the deep, the dark abyss of everlasting pain.

At these words Satan in terror vanished away ; while Jesus on his bended knees, with his eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, thus presented his fervent supplications :

O Almighty Father, Sovereign Lord of all things, my shield, my refuge, and my only hope in sad distress ; must I endure the sharpest sorrows, and suffer the most excruciating pains ? Ah must I drink the black envenom'd cup filled with the bitterest ingredients ? O Father, hear me in this sad hour of darkness and distress ; save me from death, and prevent the enormous guilt of shedding my innocent blood. If this may save them from the wrath to come, O save them now, and save me from their rage : But if nothing
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less than my death can redeem a guilty world, I patiently submit, resigned unto thy will.

After these words he arose from the ground, left the arbour, and passed through the silent solitary gloom, while a crowd of sorrows rushed into his mind; for by a divine foresight he beheld death approaching with all its terrors; he surveyed the persecution of his friends; the ruin of his country; the contempt of his grace; and the everlasting perdition of impenitent sinners. This mournful and melancholy prospect oppressed his tender and sympathizing heart to such a degree, that he fell into a bloody sweat, which distilled in drops, and dyed with crimson the humid earth. No longer could his feeble joints support the weight of his afflicted body; down he sits, and reclining on his arm breathed out groans of unutterable woe. While thus he lay in agonizing sorrow, a band of angels stood invisible around him, and beheld his sufferings with tender pity and admiration. But Gabriel, who had been sent, to strengthen him upon that occasion, when he saw his spirits so far exhausted, clothed himself in robes of purest light, his countenance and gesture expressed a celestial dignity, mixed with the greatest compassion; an air of the highest love and esteem was blended with that awful veneration and respect due to the person of so great a sufferer. As soon as he appeared, he thus addressed the Messiah.

O Son of God, could angels weep like mortal men, angels would weep in saddest sorrow for thy distress

distress. We view thy sufferings with tender sympathy, and with the highest admiration we behold thy fervent love to God and man; we see thy fortitude, meekness, patience, and resignation, with transporting wonder and astonishment; the amazing virtues of thy life, we regard as the most compleat standard of our imitation: Confirmed, and encouraged by thy spotless example, we persevere in everlasting love to God and men, we view thy actions with dear delight, we encamp around thy paths, and sound thy praises through the ample sky. Thou great Messiah, God's eternal Son, go on through sorrow, shame, and pain, and death; bruise Satan's head, redeem the chosen race, and rise triumphant to the throne of God. At these words, the angel taking him by the hand, raised him up, while a divine energy revived his sinking spirits, and strengthened every limb. Immediately the radiant form dissolved in air, and became invisible as before.

He then returned to the Disciples, but found them asleep, being exhausted with weariness and sorrow. Awake, my friends, said he, awake; and with these words he gently rebuked their security: Alas, Peter, this is far from the declaration you lately made; how will you die with me, when you cannot so much as watch an hour with me in my deep distress? Watch and pray, least ye enter into temptation. After this he retired again, praying in the same manner; but when he returned he found them asleep as before: The third time he withdrew, and poured out his soul.

soul in the same strains of bitter anguish and pious resignation. Upon his return he found them still asleep : Awake my friends, he said again, for neither the time, nor the place will admit of any rest ; I excuse your weakness, I know ye are willing ; arise now, for the enemy is at hand.

Immediately they arose, and by the time they came to the rest of the Disciples, who were placed near the gate ; the glaring beams of torches and of lanthorns poured upon their sight, and filled their hearts with terror ; for a multitude in arms had surrounded the vineyard. They had crossed the valley in profound silence, and to prevent the alarm, their lights were concealed, 'till they had encompassed the place where he was ; when suddenly their torches were kindled, and their lanthorns exposed, lest darkness should favour his escape. But all these precautions were unnecessary, for he knew their designs, and had no intention to evade the danger.

As soon as they had arrived, Judas approaches with a countenance full of guilty confusion ; he salutes his Master, he embraces and kisses him, with all the outward demonstrations of honour and respect. In this manner he is pointed out to the multitude, and distinguished from the rest of his Disciples. Immediately with drawn swords, and a great number of staves lifted high, the enraged mob gathered around him ; while he with a voice of mildness and majesty, thus bespoke the traitor : Judas, is this your friendship to me ?
do

do you betray your Master with a kiss? The perfidious wretch stood confounded, and the crowd for a little time remained in awful suspense. Then he asked whom they sought; they told him, it was Jesus of Nazareth: To which he replied, I am the very man you seek. At these words, to shew how awful goodness is, when we mean to injure it, and how easily he could have baffled the most daring attempts against his life, a divine power unbraced their nerves, deprived them in a moment of all their strength, and threw them prostrate on the ground. Then had they perished in their impious attempts; but he had compassion upon them, and suffered them to arise. As soon as they had recovered, he asked them again, Whom seek ye? They replied, Jesus of Nazareth; then said he, I am the man, and therefore if your designs are against me, let these my Disciples depart without any molestation. At these words, Malchas, a servant of the High Priest, stretched out his hand to lay hold upon him; while Peter, transported with the most impetuous and precipitate zeal, drew his sword, and aiming at Malchas, with a design to cleave his head asunder, he made a violent stroke, but missing the head, he cut off his right ear: Upon which, speedy vengeance would have dyed the garden with Simon's blood, had not his Master, who formerly calmed the raging deep, at this time quieted the tumult of the people; for turning to Malchas, he said, Patience, young man, excuse the rashness of my Disciple, I'll heal

heal the wound ; then touching his ear, the effusion of blood was stopped, the pain instantly gone, and all was sound and whole. Then turning to Peter, who stood in confusion, strangely agitated with a variety of passions, and the sword yet drawn in his hand, he said, Put up your sword again, nor attempt to fight in my defence, for be assured, that they who have now come in arms against me, shall at last perish by the sword of their enemies ; it is the will of my Father I should now suffer, and therefore I submit. No man can take my life from me, without my own consent : For even at this time, should I pray unto my Father, he would send in my defence, more than twelve legions of angels ; but how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, for all this was foretold by the Prophets, and I frequently warned you of it. Then addressing himself to the multitude, he said, Why came ye here in the darkness of the night, armed with swords and staves, as if ye were in pursuit of a robber, who must be taken by surprize, or overcome by violence ? Have I ever concealed myself from you ? Or did I ever in a seditious manner appear with men in arms to defend my person ? No : I taught daily in your Temple, there I healed your sick ; had I been guilty of any crime, why did ye not lay hold on me then ? But this is the time appointed for my sufferings, and now God permits you to execute your wicked and cruel designs against me. At these words the
soldiers

soldiers apprehended him, while sad disappointment and distracting terror seized his Disciples.

Thus all their hopes being gone, they fled away, and left their Lord amidst surrounding foes. Whilst with a mournful heart, and weary steps, he travels along the valley, no tender eye beheld him with compassion, for every heart around him gloried in their success, and guarded the afflicted prisoner with triumphant exultation. Having entered the city, he is conducted first to the habitation of Annas, where he was bound with cords as a criminal, from thence to the palace of the High Priest, where the Sanhedrim was assembled, in expectation of his arrival, and fully determined to take away his life. By this time Peter recovering a little from his terror, spoke in the following manner to John the beloved Disciple: What now shall we do? our Lord is carried off a prisoner by his enemies, and our brethren are all fled; O sad and melancholy night! But what more could I have done? Willingly would I have fought in his defence, but he would not permit; now he is in the hands of them who seek his life; I am impatient to know the end of this. Certainly he is able to deliver himself; we have seen his power over all diseases, we beheld his triumph over hell and death; who can resist that potent arm, whom the winds and seas obey? The Almighty God defends him wherever he goes, and divine wrath can blast his enemies in a moment. I remember now what he
said,

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said, Ye shall all be offended because of me this night, and I shall be left alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. If God be on his side, as certainly he is, what can his enemies do against him? Let us follow and see the end; who knows but he intends to confound the wicked with an awful and speedy vengeance; possibly his kingdom may begin with acts of dreadful power, against those who have despised his grace: For my part, it is still my resolution, that tho' all should forsake him, I never will. To all this John replied, in great sorrow and perplexity, I know not what to say or do, fear drives me back, yet hope, and love, incline me strongly to follow where he's gone: I'll therefore go, and see what yet may happen. Accordingly they went, and in solemn sadness they travelled to the city, and went directly to the palace of Caiaphas, where John being known to the High Priest, ventured immediately into the hall, after the company that conducted his Master, while Peter, having no acquaintance, nor friend there, stood for some time without the door; till John speaking to the door-keeper, caused him to be admitted. But as soon as he had entered, the maid, who let him in, said to him, were not you also one of his Disciples? Surprized at the question, and dreading the consequence, he replied, I am not; then advancing forward, he thrust himself among a crowd of servants, who stood around the fire, expecting to pass undiscovered, and to observe all that was done. Now by this time Jesus stood before

before the High Priest, who spoke to him in the following words.

We have long endured with too much clemency, your repeated offences, your seditious actions, and your false pretensions to the exalted title of the Messiah. Your sins have at last found you out, and justice cries aloud for speedy vengeance upon your guilty head. Tell me now the names of your Disciples, what their rank and business? What do you mean by assembling such multitudes in every corner? What are the strange and peculiar doctrines you teach? Or whom do you pretend to be?

To all these questions he replied with undaunted meekness, and majesty: If you desire to find the truth, and to judge with equity, ask mine accusers, let them declare what they have heard and seen, enquire of the Scribes and Pharisees, and of all that ever heard my doctrine. Why do you ask me, as if I had taught privately and in a corner? Whatever I delivered was in publick, openly, and in the face of all the world? I taught always in your Temple, and synagogues, on your sabbaths and solemn feast-days; in the places and times of greatest concourse; and in secret have I never said any thing that I was ashamed should be made known to the whole world. At these words an officer belonging to Annas, who was desirous of shewing his zeal against Jesus, and to ingratiate himself with the High Priest, in a violent rage struck him on the face, saying, How dare you answer the High Priest

Priest in this manner? Do you pretend to give directions how he shall proceed in judgment? To this Jesus replied, with the greatest meekness and patience; If I have spoken with indecent freedom, or said any thing that is criminal, accuse me now before the council as you ought to do: But if I have said nothing amiss, why do you, contrary to justice and humanity, strike me uncondemned, and even in the presence of the court? No regard was paid to his words, no rebuke given to the unjust and cruel man; justice was excluded from their council, and malice raged in every heart.

In the mean time, while Peter stood by the fire, one of the servants looking in his face, and recollecting that he had seen him in company with Jesus, said to him, I am certain you were one of this man's Disciples. Peter then in great terror and confusion swore, that he knew nothing about him; then immediately he withdrew from the fire side into the porch, while the cock crew after midnight.

As the Chief Priests had determined to put Jesus to death at all hazards, they had suborned false witnesses, who were now called upon and examined; but as their different testimonies were either trifling, or contradictory, no plausible foundation could be laid, for a sentence against him. At last two men appeared, who solemnly affirmed, that upon a certain occasion, they heard him threaten, that he would destroy the Temple, and build it in three days, alledging, that thereby he discovered

discovered a hostile intention against the whole City, and a wicked design of imposing upon the multitude. To this accusation he made no reply, being founded entirely on malice, and on a wrong interpretation of his words. All this they knew perfectly, and therefore when he had remained silent for a little, the High Priest rose in a passion, and said to him, Have you nothing to answer? Can you make no reply to the accusation now brought against you? But Jesus knowing that they only intended to extort an answer from him with a malicious design to lay hold on his words, and turn them into an accusation against him, he therefore held his peace. Then said the High Priest again, I am well informed that many of the deluded multitude regard you as the Messiah, and that you have in the most impious and daring manner, publicly assumed that sacred character; I therefore adjure you in the most solemn manner, by the dreadful and tremendous name of God, in whose presence you stand, that you tell us plainly, and truly, whether you be indeed the Messiah, the Son of God. To this he replied, I am the very person, and though I now stand before you as a criminal, despised and afflicted; yet I came from the heavens, and thither will I return again; and of this you shall in a very short time see a convincing proof, when I come to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, to establish my Kingdom among the Gentiles, and to judge the world in the last day. At these words the High Priest rent his clothes in great indignation, and

and cried out in fury, Here now is the most notorious blasphemy, what occasion have we for any witnesses, ye have heard him with your ears, what now do ye think of him? Then they all at once cried aloud, he is guilty of the most atrocious crime, and deserves the most infamous death.

Being now condemned as a blasphemer, and ordered to be kept under a strict guard until the morning, the servants immediately fell upon him, and abused him with all imaginable rudeness and contempt; some in cruel derision pulled him by the hair of the head, others spit in his face, some beat him with their fists, and others having blindfolded him, struck him violently with their hands, and in barbarous scorn insulted him, saying, you who pretend to be the Messiah, tell us if you can, who he was that struck you last. In this manner, and with various other indignities was he treated through the remaining part of that dismal night.

During the whole trial John stood in mournful silence among the crowd. Some times he was filled with surprize and indignation, at the shameless partiality and glaring injustice of the chief priests and elders. When he beheld his despised and highly injured master standing at the tribunal of his enemies, the most tender sympathy and distressing sorrow preyed upon his generous and friendly heart. When he thought of his patience and prudence, his meekness and magnanimity, he was transported with wonder and

and admiration. But as soon as he reflected upon the exalted hopes he had formerly entertained, and the sad disappointment which was likely to follow, he was then involved in the most dreadful perplexity ; as soon therefore as he heard the unjust sentence pronounced, and saw the rudeness of the multitude against his master, he could no longer endure to behold the dismal scene ; but in the agonies of grief and terror he silently and with a flood of tears departed from the house. A little before this, Peter also had withdrawn from the Palace ; for while the false witnesses were bitterly accusing his Master, a relation of Malchas who stood near to Peter and heard him speak, immediately approached, and said to him, you are certainly one of his Disciples, I find by your language, you are a Galilean, and I am confident I saw you with him in the Garden ; you are the man who attempted to fight in his defence. At these words, apprehending that he would be immediately arrested as a criminal, he, in the utmost terror and indignation, denied the third time, with horrid oaths, and dreadful imprecations upon himself, if ever he had any thing to do with him. Scarce had he uttered these words when the cock crew again, being about three in the morning ; and Jesus at the same instant, standing before the Chief Priest, turned about, and with an expressive look fixed his eyes upon Peter, who in a moment was filled with shame and remorse, for then it was he remembered these words of his Master, before the cock
crow

crow twice, three times will you deny that ever you knew me. Being fully sensible of his guilt, he immediately withdrew, and gave full vent to his sorrows in a lonely dark retreat; while the following words, intermingled with groans and tears, discovered the bitter repentance of his soul.

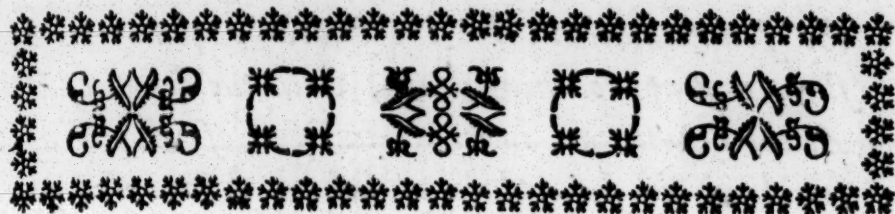
Alas! what have I done — denied my Lord, my Master and my Friend — Him whom I believed and confessed to be; the Son of the living God — Three times I denied him, and almost to his face — And with horrid oaths — O perjury, the blackest and the basest perjury — Sure I deserve a curse — I cursed my self — A heavy curse hangs o'er my guilty head — He kindly forewarned me of all this; this aggravates my guilt — Now watch and pray, said he, Satan hath sought to sift thee — How true are all his words — I am sifted now indeed, I am only chaff before the wind — Ah! guilty wretched man, what shall I do? what madness brought me to yon detested place — I went to see the end, a dreadful one to me — I thought to have seen his foes convinced, or confounded, or destroyed, but vain were all my hopes — Better perhaps he did not, for had he in wrath put forth his power, the first the heaviest stroke had surely fallen on my perjured head — Judas betrayed him, and I have denied him, what better am I than he? — Ah frail, inconsistent, inconsistent wretch! I would have sought for him in the Garden, yet I denied him in the Palace. — I am worse than Caiaphas — worse than

all his public foes ; they never confessed him as I have done ; they never resolved to die for his sake — Ah ! had I been grateful to my best friend, had I felt the tender bowels of compassion for afflicted innocence ; or had a generous indignation against triumphant wickedness touched my heart, sure these might have inspired me with some small degree of courage and resolution ; but alas ! terror and disappointment were the only passions that distracted my guilty heart. Oh ! that I had fled with the rest of my afflicted brethren ; then might I with innocence, have bewailed the distresses of my Lord, and lamented the sad reverse of all my flattering hopes — But my folly, my rashness, my self confidence, these have involved me in the blackest guilt, and now torment me with the most painful remorse, and almost sink me to the bottom of despair — Did ever affronted innocence look so mild ? and yet these mild and gentle looks have pierced my heart, and filled my soul with horror — O dreadful guilt, how can I behold thee ! the crowing of that cock shall never wear out of my remembrance — O the mild, the piercing looks of him whom I denied — I saw him turn about and look on me, then all my guilt rose dreadful to my view — Once I heard him say these awful words, more awful now than ever ; Whosoever shall deny me before men, him also will I deny, before my Father and his holy Angels, — I am certainly the man he had in view — O God be merciful to me

— O Jesus forgive the wretch who basely has denied thee — Will repentance avail me nothing? He preached repentance, and so did I in his name, will he then reject the penitent? No he cannot, — Here is my hope — I bitterly repent — I love him still, yea more than ever, he knows my weakness, he'll surely pity me; he prayed for me, when he foresaw my fall, God certainly will hear his prayer. Here will I rest, yet clouds and darkness hover round my soul — Ah dreadful night! — Dreadful to him, to me, and all his friends. But who can tell what yet may come? in God I'll trust, I'll still believe on him; all may be well, tho' all seems dark to me.



THE



T H E
M E S S I A H.



B O O K V.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

Gabriel ascends from the Garden, and meets Raphael upon the extremity of the atmosphere with a multitude of angels from the most distant parts of the universe. The reason of their long journey. During the night Raphael entertains them with a discourse relating to the Son of God, his

creating the World, the fall of Man, his conduct to the Patriarchs, his election and government of the Jewish nation; his incarnation, public ministry, and approaching death, with the design of it. At the dawn, an immense number of Angels assemble in the same place to behold the transactions of the day. Raphael delivers the commands of God, to Neriël, Zedekel, Eliphal, and to the whole assembly. In the morning Jesus is condemned in the council-chamber. Judas repents, despairs, and hangs himself. The trial of Jesus by Pontius Pilate, and Herod, he is declared innocent. The obstinate malice of the Chief Priests, various methods used by the Governor to save his life; but is at last condemned to the Cross.

NO sooner had the angel Gabriel comforted the Messiah, than he ascended through the liquid sky, nor stayed his rapid flight till he reached the smooth yielding surface of the aerial flood, and stood erect, as on a sea of glass, diffused around this gross terraqueous globe. Here, in the vast circumference of the atmosphere, ten thousand clouds are formed and disappear, raised by the solar heat in every clime, from earth below, and from the watry deeps. Here, thunders roar with awful voice, and fly around on wings of flaming fire. From hence the rain distils, in gentle showers, or falls precipitate in rapid floods, the rattling hail, or fleecy snow descends upon the earth. Here, cold and heat,

heat, and moist, and dry, convened in dusky vapours, swim o'er the hills, or fly in wild confusion while the tempest roars ; when rarified, they mount on high, and melt into liquid air ; but if condensed, they quickly fall, and pour their contents on the verdant plains. It is only in the lower regions, over the land and sea, where these stormy vapours hold their furious reign : But far above, the thin transparent air, is pure and peaceful, even to the utmost verge, where the refined æther fills the ambient space : here, Angels breathe immortal life and joy, and here they stand, or walk, or fly, which way they will, independant of all material attraction. From hence, they view the various ways of men, as we behold with curious eyes, the creeping insects in the bottom of a pure transparent fountain. From thence, they often descend to visit the habitations of mortality, nor do they suffer any inconveniency from the different mediums through which they pass, like flesh and blood who breathe the elastic air. That immense sky, stretched far above our heads, and which appears an azure concave to our view, is seen by Angels far distant on the æthereal plains, as a chrysal sphere around the earth ; but when beheld much nearer, it seems a flood, calm, and serene, a sea without a shore, at whose transparent bottom this globe appears, sometimes obscured by wandering spots, such are the clouds to Angels in the sky. Now on the vast circumference of that

sphere, Gabriel arrives, and views afar off, Raphael descending from the worlds above, with a mighty host of Cherubims and Powers celestial. In a short time they light around him upon the azure plain, where, after mutual salutations of undissembled friendship, Gabriel thus began.

O thou exalted Prince, thou leader of Angelic hosts, may I enquire from whence, and who are these, or what their business to this lower world? Strangers they seem to me, in Regions far remote they needs must dwell; in all my journies from the throne of God, to this inferior world, I do not remember to have seen their faces. Matters of great import, no doubt have brought them here, if it be lawful for me to enquire, or for you to relate the occasion of their journey, I shall attend with pleasure. To this Raphael answered in the following words. Their business here is no secret, a matter of universal concern to the intelligent Creation has brought them down to this world from their native habitation. Ten hundred times and more, has yon dark Earth seen the revolutions of day and night, since the Almighty Father from his splendid throne, pronounced these words, which doubtless you also heard; "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," ye Saints and all ye blessed Angels within the vast circumference of my dominions; assemble now, in yon far distant world, near where Uriel holds his radiant throne; there

there rolls the Earth, encompass'd by the wandering moon, whose paler beams and varying face, divide the seasons, and measure out the time to mortal men ; on yonder Earth dwells my beloved Son, my only Son in whom my glory is expressed. 'Tho' he appears to the inhabitants of that world, a man in all respects like themselves, yet I behold his glory beaming through the flesh ; on him my love, my chiefest love shall rest, when suns and stars shall perish and decay. In him my wisdom, power, and goodness shall for ever dwell, and through him shall be displayed in everlasting bounty, to blessed Angels, and righteous men ; there shall ye behold what never yet was seen through the vast extent of creation, a world redeemed by his precious blood, and rebellious angels conquered by his death. Go then and view his sufferings, behold his glorious deeds, learn from his life how men and angels ought to live.

Thus spoke th'eternal from his splendid throne, his voice was heard with a joyful obedience, and immediately they assemble in flaming squadrons from ten thousand worlds. Since that time, they frequently descend to behold his wonderful actions, and ascend again by turns, and now on this pure convexity they travel far to the east along with the rising sun ; they view the earth ; behold its various climates ; they bewail the nations sunk in ignorance of the true God, and mark those lands where the fallen angels hold
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their impious thrones. All this perhaps you know : but as for these bright legions whom you now behold, they are indeed strangers, the inhabitants of far distant worlds, but lately sprung from Chaos and eternal night. Their dwelling-place is on the utmost verge of nature, fast by the dark, the deep, the infinite abyss of boundless space, where God alone resides ; three years and more have they travelled on their way, swifter than the beams from yon refulgent star, and having pass'd unnumber'd worlds, and glorious systems, suns and revolving planets, stretch'd out in empty space, far, far beyond the reach of mortal eyes, or human thought, they now await the rising day, and the arrival of other angelic powers, when all the sons of light shall behold with amazement the sufferings and death of the great Messiah.

To all this Gabriel listened with a pleasing aspect, and then replied, I am just now arrived from the Earth, and from the presence of the Messiah. There I beheld him sunk in the deepest sorrows, oppressed with agony and woe unutterable. The lively apprehension of his own death, together with the most tender feelings of compassion for the miseries of the human race, had exhausted his strength to such a degree, that he fell to the ground, and had almost expired in a bloody sweat. To him I administered divine consolation, and strengthened every fainting limb. Tho' he could have escaped from his enemies,

enemies; yet he would not, and tho' his power be infinitely superior to their united strength, yet he will by no means defend his own person, nor blast with indignation their impious designs; angels may behold the dreadful scene, but dare not interpose; whatever God permits, he is determined to suffer, neither friends nor foes, nor hell nor earth can shake the purpose of his soul. Such pure and spotless virtue; such filial obedience to God, and love to all the human race; such meekness, condescension, and magnanimity, did never yet appear in heaven above, nor on the earth below. I viewed him with tender pity, I beheld him with the highest admiration, and having now ministered to him in his great distress, I ascend the heavens again, and wait with pleasure the high commands of our Almighty Sovereign.

I bear his charge, replied the mighty Prince, here let us stay till morning light arise, till all our armies gather where we stand, then shall ye hear what wonders must be done by potent angels while the great Messiah suffers. On Raphael's right hand stood a bright Seraph, who commanded the Angelic Powers that dwelt in the most distant worlds, bordering on the utmost verge of nature; celestial grace and majesty beamed from his countenance, while thus he expressed the fervent wishes of his heart.

O thou exalted Prince, who conducted our joyful legions from the empyrean to this lower world;
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let us hear the virtues of that man divine, that Son of God, who you say is now afflicted on the earth. Ten thousand times ten thousand worlds and more, fill up the boundless space between this dark globe, and the starry regions where we dwell. In these, we have always discovered unerring wisdom, almighty power, and everlasting goodness; but how these perfections appear, and in what manner they are displayed to the inhabitants of this world, we neither know nor can conceive; please then to inform us till the dawning light arise, who that person is, whom you call the Son of God, for we thought all angels had been his Sons; he seems more dear to him than all others, why does he live obscure in yon dark world? why in that world is he so distress'd? and wherefore must he die?

To these questions Raphael answered, with a countenance full of majesty and mild benevolence, not hours, but years might roll away, said he, before the half be told that might be told of him. This Son of God is he who made this lower world where now he dwells, and every other world, seen by immortal or by mortal eyes; God made them all it's true, but made them all by him. I saw the day when the foundations of the earth were laid, and the heavens stretched out; I then beheld, and thousands more besides, when clothed in majesty divine, he swift descended into the empty space. He only spoke, and lo! the various elements of this material world

world sprung up in wild confusion. He said, thou glorious light arise, and at his word the light appear'd; thou azure sky extend thy ample sphere around the globe, and so it was; retire ye floods, and let the verdant earth appear with hills and dales; the verdant earth with hills and dales were seen, with various seas and rolling floods collected in the hollow deeps. Shine forth thou radiant sun, thou paler moon and twinkling stars send forth your silver beams, and rule the lonely night; the flaming sun blaz'd in the sky, the day shone forth, and in the night the moon and stars appear'd. The hideous monsters in the rolling tide, and every fish that cuts the yielding stream, he then produced, and every fowl that wings the lucid air; all these sprung from the watery element at his command. Thou fruitful earth, he said, bring forth the various tribes of brutal life, the wild, the tame, the great, the small, the swift, the slow, on rocky mountains and on the level plains, lo, at his word the teeming earth brought forth each various kind, in full perfection, all without a fault. All these he made in six revolving days; we saw the different parts arise in gradual succession, not at once, for then only had we seen the effects stupendous of Almighty Power; but as in order every part sprung up at his command, we could discern the wise design, and beautiful contrivance of the whole. Then it was, that ten thousand Cherubims and heavenly Saints stood round the verge of

of this new rising world, where six dark globes encompass'd by their moons of various size, and at due distances, revolve in just proportions round the central sun. Each day we beheld with transporting admiration, new wonders rising to our view ; from darkness and wild confusion, we saw the dawnings of order and harmony, carried on by slow degrees to their full perfection, and all the parts so wisely adjusted, as to form one grand and complicated machine, whose various motions tend to produce the happiness of all who dwell therein. At sight of this creation, ten thousand angels resound his praises on their golden harps, and all the Sons of God shouted in raptures of extatic joy.

The last and noblest of all his work was man ; him he formed after his own image ; the dust of the earth supplied materials for his body, his soul was of a divine original, capable of immortality like our selves, and invested with dominion over all the inferior creatures ; two of these only, were formed at the beginning, from whom innumerable multitudes have since descended. These were placed in a state of trial ; immortal life, and never ending happiness was to be the reward of their obedience ; but death and final woe, the consequence of their rebellion, and the just punishment of their disobedience. But Satan, the leader of apostate angels, of whom perhaps ye heard in distant worlds, in disguise entering their peaceful habitation, he deceived and drew them
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into guilt. Then had they perished by the sword of justice, but mercy interposing, saved their lives, yet not for ever; an immortality on earth to them had been their greatest curse; then entered death, and all that springs from dust, returns to dust again. Mercy appointed this, to be the terror of vice, and the trial of virtue, to cut off the incorrigible from society, and to deliver the righteous from the evils to come. No sooner had rebellion entered into that world, than a promise of deliverance from sin and death, was made to them, by one who should descend from their loins, one who should destroy the power of Satan, and raise them from the dead to a blessed immortality in the heavenly regions. Time would fail me to relate the various transactions, and appearances of the Son of God and inferior angels to the early inhabitants of this world. At length when all nations had revolted from the true God, joined in rebellion with Satan, and fallen into the grossest idolatry, he appeared to Abraham the Father of the Jewish nation, renewed the original promise, made choice of his posterity as his own peculiar people, delivered to them his laws, and ruled over them in a special manner by a series of extraordinary dispensations. At last the happy time drew nigh when God intended to redeem his people, and destroy the kingdom of Satan by the mediation of his well-beloved son, whose character and ministry he had clearly foretold by the Jewish prophets. The
time

time being fully accomplished, the very time when the world stood most in need of him, and was best prepared to receive him, he laid aside his glory, left the heavens, and descended to this lower world, not in the glorious majesty of power divine, nor in form angelic, a pure ætherial substance such as ours; but wonderful to tell, united to a human body, and conceived by power divine, in a virgin's womb he lay concealed for nine revolving moons; at length, a feeble infant he breathed the vital air, and viewed the glimmering dawn of light through mortal eyes; in low disguise he thus appeared like all the sons of men, subject to pains and wants, to perils, toils, and death; no regal pomp, nor splendor of terrestrial power was seen in him. Full thirty years he lived in low obscurity, humble and unknown to men, but seen, admired, and guarded by angelic hosts. The Almighty Father then, with awful voice proclaimed him his well-beloved son; angels, and men, and devils heard that voice; Satan confounded, trembled at the sound, and feared confinement in the burning lake. He tried his wiles, and all the snares he could invent, but all in vain, for nothing could seduce the Son of God. Inspired by the sacred light of heavenly wisdom; at length he preached repentance to the chosen race, and life eternal to all who trust in him. By the most stupendous acts of power and grace, he gave abundant proofs of his authority and divine character:

rafter : but Satan and wicked men prompted by infernal madness have now conspired against his life, that life, more precious than the heavens, and all their numerous hosts ; yea God permits that sacred life to fall, as the only means to save a sinking world. All this he knows will come to pass, all this he'll bear, in pure obedience to his Fathers will, and kind compassion to the human race. So pure and perfect shall his righteousness appear in death, that for his sake, and for the encouragement of virtue among men, a pardon will be granted to all who believe in him, and dutifully submit to his laws. Within the space of three days he will arise from the dead, and soon after ascend the heavens, sit down on the right hand of God, far above all principality and power and might and dominion. Then shall the power of Satan be broken in every nation, truth and righteousness shall spread afar, even to the uttermost ends of the earth, and all the inhabitants of this world become the servants of the living God. The end of all things shall then approach, the dead shall be raised, men and devils shall be judged, and this inferior world shall perish in devouring flames ; the wicked shall then be punished, and the righteous rewarded with everlasting honour and glory. But now the dawn appears, I see our legions lighting on the plain.

Scarce had Raphael ceas'd, when lo ! the clear convexity of heaven was covered all around with
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pure ætherial spirits, in rank and file, compacted close, and countless as the dew of Hermon, or the pearly drops on the rosy fields of Sharon. Over all the lucid hemisphere they stood, in perfect order, circle within circle, as in the troubled pool, wide and more wide the swelling circles move; Judea was the centre, the scene of awful deeds, nor was the light obscured by all these numerous hosts; for still they remained invisible to mortal eyes; yet when they please they clothe themselves in robes of air condens'd, and dyed with various light. No sound of wild confusion or uproar was heard; a solemn silence sat on every lip. At last the great ætherial trumpet blew, this trumpet once was heard before on Sinai's cloudy top, but never since, nor shall be heard again by mortal ears, till the Messiah rend the heavens in flaming fire, and raise the dead to life. Then spoke Raphael with an awful voice, and thus proclaim'd the Almighty's dread commands.

Attend ye Saints, and all ye Angels, ye Thrones, Dominions, Cherubims and Powers; behold this day the Son of God must die, not by constraint; constrain'd indeed by love, but not compell'd by force. The wicked men of the Jewish nation, deluded and prompted by the powers of darkness, have already decreed his death; and God, who can bring good out of evil, permits them to execute their bad designs; from his temporal sufferings, shall arise glory to himself,

himself, and everlasting joy to all good men; the wickedness of the world shall murder the Lord of life, and by his death shall the power of sin be broken, the accurs'd infernal serpent shall bite his heel, and he, in just wrath, shall grind the snake to dust. Die he must, as the Prophets have foretold, by the hands of wicked men, and under the false imputation of a Deceiver; but God intends that the impartial world in every age, shall be convinced of his innocence, and the divine authority by which he acted. For this end, Neriël, descend thou immediately to the earth, enter Jerusalem, and find out the perfidious Disciple; awaken in his soul the horrors of conscious guilt, a sense of shame, and the terrors of future punishment, that in the bitterest agonies of remorse, he may confess his crime, and bear witness to the innocence of his afflicted and condemned Lord. Let his confession be public, that he and all his wicked associates may be altogether without excuse; then let despair drive on the guilty wretch to sudden death, a death inflicted by those very hands which sold the Lord of life. This circumstance shall fully clear the Son of God from the malicious imputations of imposture and deceit. But as the Jews intend to inflict upon the Messiah, the most infamous and tormenting death of the Cross, they must apply to the Roman governor, a man covetous, bloody, and unjust; before his tribunal shall the Son of God appear; therefore Zedekel, thou art commanded

commanded to descend, and while he sits in judgment, drive away from his mind all prejudice, and partiality ; impress upon the imagination of his consort while asleep, such a distressing vision, as may incline both her and her husband to favour the righteous, and spare the innocent blood ; and when at last he shall pronounce the unjust and cruel sentence through fear of the Jews, let him declare publicly, by some strong expressive sign, that it was extorted by menaces, granted with reluctance, and contrary to all justice and humanity. Whoever then shall examine his doctrines, his life and miracles, together with the confession of Judas, and the declaration of Pilate, will see in the clearest light that Jesus was no Deceiver, but the true Messiah, and the Son of the living God. But further, as this awful day must stand upon record throughout every age, while the sun and moon endure, the heavens above, and the foundations of the earth, must feel the pangs of their innocent and dying Lord ; every eye must behold this dismal scene with deep distress, in solemn sadness, and with fearful omens of approaching wo. All joy shall cease, all pensive hearts shall mourn, and deadly horrors fill the wretched land. The flocks shall cease to feed, the herds in mournful accents low, the fowls of heaven shall seek a safe retreat, and hell's dark mansions vomit up their dead. The infernal hosts shall have a short triumph, and heaven's bright legions tremble at his death. Then let us
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all descend near to the earth, and resting on th' inferior clouds, with wonder view the dreadful scene. In the mean time, while he hangs upon the cross, and when we behold his sacred limbs stain'd with the crimson blood, thou Eli-phael, put out the golden lamp of heaven, nor let the radiant sun shine on the earth while the great Messiah dies. Let sudden darkness spread his sable wings, and cast an awful gloom o'er all the land, while he who is the world's great luminary, his glory veiled, hangs in a sad eclipse upon the cross. And when his last expiring words are heard, let Gabriel descend to Mount Calvary, and shake the earth and rend the solid rocks; the yawning graves throw up their dead, and the shocking ravages of mortality exposed to public view. By all these wonders, God intends to signalize the death of his well-beloved Son, to rouse attention, to awaken all serious well-disposed minds, and to prepare them for greater evidence yet to come.

The orders of the Almighty being now delivered by the archangel Raphael, they all descend in a moment, and rest upon the lowring clouds, where they observe with the most eager attention the amazing transactions of the day.

By this time the rising sun had dyed with crimson the eastern clouds, the wild beasts of the forest had retired into their dens, and busy mortals begun the labours of the day: When by order of the Chief Priest, Jesus is led a prisoner to the council-

council-chamber in the Temple, where the Sanhedrim is now assembled for his trial, the night before having been illegal, both with respect to time and place, which should have been in the day, and in the place where they now met : With an intention therefore to give their unjust proceedings the appearance of a legal trial, they bring him again to the bar. There he stands in meek and peaceful Majesty, while the High Priest said to him, Last night you confess'd your self to be the true Messiah, the Son of the living God, and the King of Israel ; do you now retract what you said, or do you stand to the same declaration ?

To this he replied, I know you will give no credit to my words, even though I should support them by the clearest and most convincing evidence ; neither will you suffer me to depart in peace : Nevertheless, I will neither conceal nor deny my real character to avoid your indignation ; and therefore I tell you again, that I am truly the Messiah, foretold and described by the antient Prophets ; and since nothing less will convince you, you shall at last be convinced, and obliged to confess the truth, when I come to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, and to judge the world in righteousness.

At these words, they again declared him a blasphemer, an impostor, and worthy of death. Now according to the law of Moses, the blasphemer was to be stoned, but this punishment, however severe, they considered as much inferior to the
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demerit of his crime, and therefore, that he might suffer the most ignominious, lingering and painful death that the Roman laws could inflict, they bound him as a malefactor, and guarded by a multitude, they led him directly to the Roman governor, a man of an impetuous and obstinate temper, a judge, whose decisions were always in favour of those who gave the highest bribes; imperious, cruel, and rapacious, and therefore more fit to accomplish their malicious designs.

In the mean time, Judas finding all his covetous and ambitious hopes disappointed by the sentence of the council, and the meek deportment of his much injur'd Lord, he began to repent of his treachery, and resolved, if possible, to clear his Master and save his life. For this end he goes to the Temple, with the reward of iniquity in his guilty hand, and in the following words addressed some of the Chief Priests and elders then present.

Ye have now, I find, condemned that righteous Man whom I basely delivered into your power, condemned him against all equity, and against my own expectations. These three years and an half have I been his intimate companion and Disciple; I have heard his doctrines; I have seen his miracles; I have observed narrowly all his actions; and during that time, I never found the least offence in his conduct either to God or men. No one could have been a more powerful witness against him than I, had he ever done amiss; ye seem
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to have been convinced of his innocence yourselves ; ye never called upon me as an evidence in the trial, and even those who did appear, ye were obliged to reject, as insufficient to convict him of any crime. Fully persuaded of his innocence, and too rashly presuming upon your integrity, I thought he would certainly have been acquitted : But now he is condemned, the apprehensions of his death fill my soul with horror : I am conscious I have betrayed the innocent blood, and now under the tormenting agonies of remorse, I publicly confess my crime, I bear the shame, and abandon with abhorrence the accursed bribe. Think seriously what you do ; never let that cruel and unjust sentence be carried into execution, lest his righteous blood should cry aloud for vengeance on the whole nation, and especially upon me, the wretched author of his death.

All this made no impression on the Priests, who only replied, What is that to us ? If you basely betrayed him into our hands, you must see to that : But as for our part, we have found him guilty, not indeed by the testimony of witnesses, but by his own confession, which surely is sufficient to condemn any criminal : He is a blasphemer, an impostor, and therefore must die. At these words Judas threw down the money in the Temple, and despairing of forgiveness, either from God or man, he departed, and retired into a lonely place, where the ruins of an antient building,

building, and the dark gloom of a tall cypress tree, o'erhanging the wall, and spreading its boughs of deathly hue, gave additional horror to his guilty mind. In this dismal solitude, all the aggravations of his crime arose full to view, like so many fiends from the deeps of hell; groaning with agony for a little time, at length he uttered the following words:

Ah wretch that I am, whither shall I go—go where I will my guilt attends me, vengeance pursues me—I have betrayed the innocent blood—my best Friend—the greatest of Prophets—yea the Son of God, and the long-expected Messiah—O horrible crime! committed against the strongest light—done with the greatest deliberation—and against repeated admonitions.—In league with his mortal enemies, and yet under the appearance of friendship, I saluted my master, and kissed him with a perfidious smile—O cursed love of gain, what hast thou done?—long have I been thy wretched slave—long have I robbed the poor to encrease my store.—Now I am undone—no wealth could ease my guilty soul, kingdoms are trifles now to me, I scorn them all—He is now condemned, all hopes of life are gone.—Why did I not believe his words? He told me that he would suffer many things of the Chief Priests and Elders, and at last be put to death; and must I be the guilty cause of all his woe—O tormenting thought, how can I endure thee!—How can I live when

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he is dead—neither solitude, nor society can give me ease.—O monster of the human race, a companion only for devils like myself.—shall I pray to God? no, I cannot; my sin is greater than can be forgiven.—The irrevocable sentence is already past; I heard it last night from himself; “Wo to him by whom the Son of Man” is betrayed, it had been good for that man if “he had not been born.”—I paid no regard to his words then, but I feel their awful meaning now—curfed be the day when I was born, and the moment when I breathed the vital air.—I sinned wilfully, presuming that his goodness would easily forgive me:—Will he now forgive? no, he cannot, he never will reverse the awful doom. Shall I force my way through the guards which surround him, and throw myself prostrate at his feet? No, the sight of these very guards would encrease my torment; for how could I behold him in that wretched condition? The piercing eyes, and gentle looks of him I betrayed, would only encrease the flames of hell already kindled in my accursed breast.—Heaven and earth are against me; God and all his angels are my foes—men and devils abhor me—the clouds above frown dreadful o’er my guilty head; these antient ruins seem to tremble with horror at my crime.—Blast me, ye lightnings in a moment, ye threatning walls crush my body to the dust, let some raging tempest carry me hence on its furious wings, and dash me headlong on some distant

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stant mountain's craggy top, or drown me in the roaring deep.—O earth ! how canst thou bear the load of so much guilt ! Open thy wide devouring jaws, and sink me ten thousand thousand fathoms below the regions of the dead.—Thy light, O sun, torments me, and life, so dear to all, is now a curse to me.—O thou God in heaven above, grant a wretch but one favour—the last favour he ever shall desire of thee ; blot me out of thy creation, and let all pain, all sense, thought, and recollection for ever cease.—Will nothing hear me, will nothing give me help?—O death, to thee I call ? thou last refuge of distracted misery, come and end my woes.—Since none will help, I'll help myself—These hands, these impious hands received the accursed bribe, these very hands shall give relief.—That aged tree, that long-extending bough, that ruined wall, and this strong girdle, all these shall help to end my cursed days.—What dreadful thoughts are these ! Begone all fear, now welcome death, despair defies all pain. At these words, with looks of infernal horror, he ascends by a breach in the wall, and from a long-extended branch which hung over it, he suspends the girdle which ended his wretched life : There, in the most violent agitation, he hung for a little time, till the knot loosening, he falls suddenly on the pointed ruinous heap below, burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

In the mean time Jesus was brought to the Governor's palace, where, in the judgment-hall stood a guard of soldiers and a number of servants : These being heathens, and the Priests under the influence of a wicked superstition, apprehensive lest they should be defiled by too near an approach to such persons, they refused to enter. The Governor being informed, that a prisoner was brought, against whom an immediate order was demanded for public execution, he therefore came out, and desired to know his crime. But they, conscious of the injustice of their own proceedings, and unwilling that a particular enquiry should be made into that affair, only answered in general, that if he were not a criminal, they would not have brought him before him. To which the Governor replied, If his crime be of a religious nature, take him away, and judge him according to your own laws, for in these matters I am an intire stranger. He is certainly a criminal, said they, for we have judged him already, and found him worthy of death ; only as it is not lawful for us to punish him with that degree of severity, which his crime most justly deserves, we demand an order from you, for his immediate crucifixion. Why, said the Governor, the man may be innocent for ought I know, and would you have me to condemn him without knowing his crime ? You must therefore exhibit an accusation against him, or I absolutely refuse to intermeddle in this affair. Being now under

a necessity of charging him with some capital offence, and knowing the dependance of the Governor upon the Roman Emperor, they accused him of sedition, affirming with the greatest confidence, that he had frequently attempted to pervert the minds of the people from their due obedience to the Roman government, forbidding to pay tribute to Cæsar, and declaring that he himself was the Messiah, the only King of the Jews. Pilate hearing these things, found it highly necessary to enquire into the truth of them, and therefore entering into the judgment-hall, and seating himself upon the Tribunal, he spoke to Jesus in the following words : “ You have now heard the crimes laid to your charge, you are allowed to speak in your own defence ; let us hear therefore what you have to say in your own vindication.”

To this Jesus replied, with a countenance and voice, calm, deliberate, and majestic ; You have now for some time held the government of Judea ; I have frequently taught in the Temple, and in the synagogues, upon every public occasion, both in the city and in the country : During all this time, have you ever heard any thing of me that could give you offence, or had the least appearance of sedition ? Or do you proceed only upon the clamour and tumult that is now raised against me ? If so, take heed that you be not imposed upon, for you will find, that the accusation laid against me, is founded entirely upon the am-

biguity of a single word; they tell you, I pretend to be King of the Jews, and from thence would make you believe that I am an enemy to Cæsar; but that is not the case, for I have no intention to establish a worldly Kingdom in opposition to the Roman Government; my designs are of a quite different nature. Then, said Pilate, I am no Jew, I know not your intentions, nor in what superstitious sense you may use certain words; the Rulers of your people, who are the best judges of these matters, have brought you before me as a person engaged in seditious practices, and if this be not the truth of the matter, pray let me know what it is. To this Jesus replied, I have indeed proposed to erect a Kingdom, but then it is entirely different from the kingdoms of this world, and has no tendency to create any disturbance in the civil government. Had I formed a design to assume the royal power, I would, like all other kings, have commanded my servants to fight for me; but this I absolutely forbade them to do, yea I exhorted them to be subject to the higher powers, to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's; and therefore to tell you the truth plainly, my Kingdom is wholly of a spiritual nature, consisting only in the obedience of mens wills and affections to the laws of God. Yet after all, said Pilate, you must acknowledge in general, that you have taken upon you the title of a King? It is true, replied Jesus; but then it is only in the
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the sense I have now explained the word. For this end was I born, and for this purpose came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth; there is no compulsion in my Kingdom, neither shall the sword ever be drawn to support my authority. I came only to publish the laws of God to the inhabitants of this world, and to enforce obedience by the rewards and punishments of a world to come. Whoever then sincerely loves, and is ready to embrace the truth, he will hear my testimony, be convinced by it, and faithfully obey it.

After this declaration, Pilate descended from the Tribunal, and came to the door of the common hall, where he spoke to the Priests and Elders in the following words.

I have now examined this man whom ye brought before me as a seditious person, and a Pretender to the kingdom of Judah, and after the strictest enquiry I find no fault in him. I know not indeed what particular doctrines he may have taught contrary to any of your religious opinions, neither is it my business to judge of these matters: But as to the government, I do not find that ever he attempted to raise any commotion, or laid claim to any authority in this province. At these words the Jews were enraged, and cried out vehemently; be assured, Sir, this man is a dangerous and seditious person, for not only Judea, but all the people of Galilee, can in like manner bear witness to what we say; he has tra-

velled over all the country, and spread his doctrine in every place, from the borders of Galilee to this city. Pilate therefore finding upon enquiry, that Jesus came from that country, and generally dwelt there, he thought with himself, that this cause belonged more properly to the cognizance of Herod. For this reason, as well as to disengage himself from the importunity of the Jews, and from an affair so odious and perplexing, he sent him to Herod, being at that time at Jerusalem, on account of the feast. As soon therefore as Jesus appeared, Herod was exceeding glad to have an opportunity of conversing with him, for he had long desired to see him, because of the wonderful reports he had often heard concerning him ; and now he expected to satisfy his own curiosity, and divert his court with the sight of some astonishing miracles. Here again he was accused of sedition by the Chief Priests in the same manner as he had been before Pilate : But conscious of his innocence, and knowing that the falsehood of these accusations was abundantly clear to Herod, he therefore made no reply. Herod now observing the bitter and malicious spirit of his persecutors, declared publickly, that the crimes alledged against him, could be supported by no sufficient evidence ; so far, said he, are these accusations from being true, especially in Galilee, that tho' I have for some years past, heard many extraordinary things concerning this man, yet I never
heard

heard any charge him with sedition ; and though vast multitudes have followed him through the country to hear his doctrine, yet I never knew of of any riot, mob, or insurrection, occasioned by his followers ; so far from that, to speak impartially, I have always found these men, who had the strongest attachment to his person, to be the most peaceable subjects in Galilee, I therefore look upon the accusation as wholly false and malicious. After this, to satisfy his own curiosity. Herod put several questions to Jesus ; Tell me, said he, who you are, for various are the reports concerning you ; some imagine you are Elias, or Jeremias, or one of the antient Prophets returned to this world ; others suppose you to be John the Baptist risen from the dead ; which of these do you pretend to be ? To this he made no reply. What, said Herod, are you ashamed, or afraid to give an account of yourself ? A Prophet you certainly pretend to be, I have often heard of your miracles, but never saw them ; now is the time to give us a proof of your extraordinary power, if you have any ; let us see what you can do. But Jesus knowing his licentious character and unworthy disposition, did not think proper to exert his power, either to save his own life, or to gratify the vain and trifling curiosity of a wicked Prince ; he therefore gave no answer to his questions, nor would he satisfy his unreasonable demands. Herod now disappointed of his hopes, and offended at his silence, began

to treat him in a ridiculous manner. This fellow, said he, is sullen, stupid, or afraid to speak in the presence of his superiors ; this shows his low birth and mean breeding : Your military appearance, said he, turning to his officers, has inspired his soul with terror ; sure he must look formidable at the head of an army : Who would not tremble at the presence of such a King ? He is now in disguise, let him therefore be clothed in apparel becoming his Majesty. Accordingly, in cruel derision, he was immediately dressed in a purple robe, and for some time, made the ludicrous object of insolent scorn and diversion by Herod and his court. Having suffered these indignities with undisturbed meekness and serenity, he was then sent back to Pilate, who after receiving an account of what had pass'd, call'd upon the Chief Priests, and spoke to them in the following words :

. You have brought this man here, before me, as a seditious person, a disturber of the government, and a seducer of the people ; but I told you, that after the most impartial enquiry, I have found no fault in him : Even Herod himself, who is of your own religion, and understands your laws and customs better than I, who am a Roman ; even he, I say, has found no truth in your accusation : Sure neither Herod nor I are of his party ; we have no expectations from him, we hold our authority under Cæsar, and could we find any evidence against him, we would readily
comply

comply with your demands. If he looks upon himself as a King, he is surely a very harmless one, there is nothing formidable in his appearance, for you see, he is neither able to defend himself, nor injure you; he has neither guards to attend him, nor riches to support him, nor friends to recommend him, nor armies to fight his battles and crown him with victory. His pretensions to Royalty, joined with the meanness of his appearance, render him only an object of ridicule and contempt; accordingly that was all the punishment Herod thought proper to inflict upon him; however, lest ye should think that punishment too slight for his offence, I will order him to be severely scourged, and then set him at liberty. But this lenity was so disagreeable to their enraged temper, that they cried aloud for immediate death, and nothing less than crucifixion would satisfy them. Pilate unwilling to shed the blood of an innocent person without any appearance of guilt, demands of them again, what evil he had done? as for my part I find no fault in him, much less any crime deserving of death. But this did only exasperate their rage, and made them more clamorous for speedy execution. Now when the noise had ceased a little, some among the multitude, who hitherto had regarded him as a great Prophet, and inwardly resenting the cruel and unjust prosecution carried on against him by the Chief Priests, thought of an expedient to set him at liberty, by demand-

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ing the release of a prisoner as usually he had done at the time of the feast. To this he readily agreed, and offered to their choice Jesus or Barabbas. Allowing them a little time for deliberation, he went into the hall, and thus he reasoned within himself : There is certainly no comparison between these two men ; Jesus I know has been greatly admired, and followed by the multitude ; the Chief Priests and Elders are his only enemies ; the multitude then will surely prefer him in their choice, to that infamous wretch Barabbas ; now certainly he'll be released. While Pilate thus thought within himself, Alexander the mortal enemy of Jesus, used all the power of his eloquence to direct the people in their choice, for in this manner he bespoke their attention.

Ye men of Israel, take heed what ye do, for upon your election matters of the last importance do evidently depend : There are many here present who lately attended the retinue of this deceitful and ambitious man, when he entered the city riding upon an ass ; be wiser now than ye were then, and let not his bold and blasphemous pretensions any longer impose upon your credulity. Are ye not ashamed of your folly, and filled with resentment against the daring impostor ? Is this the desire of all nations, the King of Israel, the mighty Prince who was to come, the triumphant Messiah, whose dominion shall extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the

the earth ? What can ye expect from this man ? he is neither able to defend himself, nor deliver you. Where now are his boasted miracles, which he pretended to work as a proof of his divine commission ? Has God forsaken him ? No ; say rather that God was never with him. How grossly have ye been deceived ? Had he been the Messiah, he could easily have confounded his enemies ; but being an impostor, he is now confounded himself, and is stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. A foolish admiration deceived you once, let not an effeminate compassion deceive you now. Barabbas, I grant, is a criminal condemned for robbery and murder, but Jesus of Nazareth is worse than he, and has been justly condemned for a blasphemer. Barabbas has offered violence to a few individuals, but Jesus has deceived a great part of the nation. Violence and bloodshed raise horror and indignation, we therefore avoid them ; but religious imposture allures the unthinking, draws them into the snare, holds them fast in the net of intricate delusion, and makes them even delight in their misery. Barabbas therefore, ought now to be the object of your choice. I speak as your friend, the friend of my country, and the mouth of our wise and holy Sanhedrim. Can ye despise our authority, doubt of our integrity, or abandon the interest of your country for the sake of a mean and dangerous impostor ? No, I hope better things from you, my dear brethren, and fellow-citizens. Think
now

now before it be too late, abandon the man who has so long deceived you, and let him suffer the just reward of his deeds.

With these words, the blind, the giddy, and ungrateful multitude were easily prevailed upon : For by this time, the governor impatient to know their choice, came out and said unto them, Whom will ye now that I release unto you, Jesus, or Barabbas ? Then with a loud and enraged voice, they all cried out, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas. What then, said the governor, shall I do with Jesus, whom they call the Messiah ? They answered again, Let him be crucified. Why, said Pilate, what evil hath he done ; would you crucify an innocent man ? Nevertheless, to please your indignation, I will now chastise him, and let him go. But this would not satisfy, for still they cried out with redoubled fury, Let him be crucified. While the clamour thus continued, a servant came to the governor with a letter from his wife, Claudia Proscula, containing these words :

By all the gods, I beseech thee, O Pilate, have no hand in gratifying the malice of the Jews, by condemning that righteous man now before thee, for in my dream this morning, I beheld him most barbarously murdered by the Jewish priests. From his innocent blood which ran in streams through the public street, there instantly arose a flame of fire, so furious and terrible that nothing could extinguish it. In a moment,

moment, the city with the adjacent country were turned into one dreadful conflagration ; the terrors of this dream have almost distracted my soul, immediately I awoke and found relief ; but the awful impressions still remain upon my frightened imagination. Remember that dreams are from Jupiter, and often warn us of what shall come to pass. After this, Pilate was determined if possible to save his life. He saw the danger that might arise from an enraged multitude, he thought of Mark Antony, who by exposing to public view the murdered body of Julius Cæsar, first raised the compassion of the people, and then inflamed their indignation against his murderers. Accordingly with the same view, he ordered Jesus to be severely scourged. This was immediately done in the common hall by the soldiers, who stripped him naked, bound him to a pillar, and scourged him with unrelenting cruelty, till his tender flesh was torn in pieces, and the pavement dyed with his precious blood. After that, they clothed him in a purple garment, plaited a crown of thorns and set it on his head, and put a reed in his hand by way of a sceptre : then kneeling down before him, they said in derision, “ long live the king of the Jews” ; after this taking the reed out of his hand, they smote him on the head, till the thorns sunk into his flesh ; then did they spit in his face, smite him on the cheek, and abuse him with all manner of insulting scorn and

and contempt. All this he endured with unshaken fortitude, astonishing meekness, and patience invincible. In this deplorable condition, Pilate brought him forth, dressed in the ornaments of mock majesty, with his head, his face, and his body streaming with blood, and while they fixed their eyes attentively upon him, the governor addressed the multitude in the following words.

Behold now the man so much admired of late, the man who taught in your temple, and healed your deceased friends; see how innocent and mild he looks, not a frown in his countenance, nor an angry word ever drops from his tongue; behold the strange reverse of fortune, not long ago ye followed him in crowds, wondering at all he said, and did; now ye persecute him with rage and fury who never did you wrong. See the ludicrous garb in which he is clothed, this crown of thorns how it sinks into his flesh. Behold that peaceful countenance stained with blood! is not this sufficient to gratify your resentment, and to excite compassion in your hearts! have ye no mercy, no pity to a poor harmless and afflicted man? is it possible ye can be so far divested of all justice and humanity, as to reject an innocent person, and choose in his stead a wretch condemned for sedition and murder. I find no fault in him, Herod found none, why then will ye be so implacable? his life depends upon

upon your word, speak that word and he shall live. But all this made no impression upon their cruel and unrelenting hearts, for no sooner had he spoken, than they cried aloud as before, "away with him, crucify him, crucify him." Pilate now finding that instead of demanding a favour of him, they seemed rather to frighten him into a compliance by the appearance of a general mutiny; he therefore told them with a severe and angry tone, seeing ye are so obstinate and implacable that he must needs be crucified, go then, execute your own cruel sentence upon him, and lay your account to answer for it in a proper time and place. As for my part it shall never be done with my consent nor by my authority. Immediately one of the Priests cried out, we are much surprized at your present conduct, for although you should find no proofs of sedition against him, yet he is certainly worthy of death. For according to our law, a man who pretends to be a Prophet ought to suffer death. Now this he has boldly done, yea more than this, for he pretends to be no less than the Son of God, which is the highest degree of blasphemy. We therefore expect you will give immediate orders for his execution.

At these words Pilate was amazed, and pausing a little, he said within himself, what man is this? I have heard many surprizing reports concerning him, the Jews have argued against him in a strange and inconsistent manner, and now at last,

last, they have brought a new accusation against him of a nature quite extraordinary ; perhaps some hero, some demi-god now stands before me ; I must enquire further into this matter, an uncommon terror possesses my mind. After these thoughts he returned again into the judgment seat. And while Jesus stood before him, he enquired who he was, whence he came, of what family he was descended, and who were his immediate parents ? to these questions Jesus made no reply. Pilate then surprized at his silence, said to him, Why do not you answer ? are you not sensible that I have power either to release you, or to crucify you as I think proper. To this he replied, I could easily secure myself in such a manner, that neither you nor the Jews could do me any injury ; but I know it is the will of God, my heavenly Father, from whom your power is derived, that for great and good ends I should now by their malice be delivered into your hands ; and seeing it is so, and that they urge you with so much importunity to put me to death, I must needs say, that your compliance with their demands, is far less criminal, than their unprovoked malice and cruelty in taking away my life.

Pilate having heard these words, and admiring his modesty, meekness, and innocent deportment, came out again and thus bespoke the multitude.

The more I enquire into the actions of this man, the more am I convinced of his innocence. His conduct is truly amazing ; he discovers no resentment against you for all the indignities ye have put upon him, such meekness, patience, fortitude, and magnanimity under sufferings have I never seen nor heard of before ; ye have brought a new and strange accusation against him ; but that has no connection with the crimes hitherto laid to his charge. He calls himself the Son of God, you say, and for ought I know it may be true : I have heard so many things of an extraordinary nature told of him, by persons of undoubted veracity, that I am inclined to believe there is something in his character that approaches to divinity, and far surpasses the rest of men. I have enquired into his original, his parents and family, to all which he gave me no answer, yet his silence did not appear to arise from sullenness, conscious guilt, or confusion, but from an inward greatness of mind, and a submission to the will of heaven, to which he refers all his sufferings. We have had men of our own nation who were descended from the gods, and were always distinguished from others by some extraordinary actions. Now, if this man be the Son of your God, what daring impiety will ye be guilty of, if ye now in the violence of your indignation, put him to an infamous death ? Beware then what ye do ; some of the greatest men of antiquity, the wisest lawgivers, and the best friends
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of their country have fallen victims to the ignorance, the envy, and the malice of an enraged faction. I am apprehensive this is now the case. Therefore set bounds to your wrath, be governed by justice and humanity, let Barabbas suffer the reward of his crimes, and let this man go free.

These words were delivered with such a degree of warmth as sufficiently expressed what a high opinion the governor had of his innocence, and how anxious he was to save his life. But all was in vain; for the Chief Priests had so inflamed the passions, and confirmed the prejudices of the multitude, that neither the authority of the governor, nor the force of reason, nor the dictates of equity, nor the feelings of humanity, were any longer regarded; for at length they proceeded to indirect threatnings against Pilate himself, to whom Alexander boldly addressed the following words.

We see you are fully determined to let this man go, notwithstanding our just complaints, and earnest demands to the contrary: But consider before it be too late, how you will answer for your conduct when called to account before the Emperor? Here is a man who pretends to be King of the Jews, one who only waits for a convenient opportunity to make himself the absolute Lord and Master of this province. We have brought him to your tribunal; we have demanded justice, and tho' you hold your authority from Cæsar, yet you have refused to inflict punishment

nishment upon him. Remember then, that any man who sets up for a King, without the consent of Tiberius, is his avowed enemy, and if you set this man free, you are not Cæsar's friend; consider therefore your own danger, and preserve your authority, by granting immediately the just demands of the people. At these words Pilate was afraid, knowing well the jealous temper of his master Tiberius, and how easily a wrong representation of these proceedings might prove his ruin: He had no longer any courage to withstand, and therefore returning to the public tribunal, which stood in a balcony belonging to his Palace, and paved with marble, he thus spoke in the audience of the multitude.

Behold, O ye hard-hearted and implacable Jews, this poor man, whom ye have accused of a design to make himself your King: He is one of your own nation, a teacher of your own religion, a man of wonderful meekness and good-nature, what pleasure can ye take in his death? Is it possible ye can be all of one mind, and that no man will speak a word in his behalf? Here, again, the cry rose with redoubled fury, "Away with him, crucify him, crucify him." There were indeed some who inclined to mercy; but the fear of the Priests, and the dread of an enraged mob, made them keep silent. Pilate now seeing their obstinate madness, answered them in a scornful manner, Why, shall I crucify your King? To which they replied, We have no King

King but Cæsar, whose interest you seem to neglect. When Pilate saw that no arguments could prevail, that nothing but clamour and confusion reigned among the multitude, apprehensive of a dangerous tumult, he granted their demands, and gave an order to the centurion and soldiers who a little before had scourged him, that immediately he should be conducted to mount Calvary, and there publicly crucified. However, to signify with how much reluctance he had passed the unjust sentence, he called for water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I call the gods to witness my innocence, and ye yourselves know, that I have done all in my power to save his life; I found no fault in him, but by your threatnings, riot, and clamorous importunity, ye have in a manner compelled me to condemn him, and therefore if ever the righteous gods, who are the avengers of oppressed innocence, or the Roman senate, shall enquire into this affair, all the guilt of this unjust and cruel prosecution shall be laid to your charge, for I am innocent of the blood of this just man. At these words the Jews cried out with a voice of indignant triumph and malicious joy, “his blood
“be upon us and upon our children, we will
“bear the blame, and answer for it.”



THE
MESSIAH.

BOOK VI.

THE ARGUMENT.

Jesus is conducted to mount Calvary. The circumstances of his death and behaviour described. The miracles which attended his crucifixion. The speech of the Centurion who watched him upon the cross. His entrance into Paradise. Hades described. The speech of Jesus to the souls of the Patriarchs and Prophets. His burial in the evening.

BARAEBAS

BARABBAS being released, and Jesus condemned to the cross, the soldiers immediately stripped him of the purple robe, clothed him in his own garments, and laying on his painful shoulders, already torn with the scourge, that ponderous beam on which he was condemned to die ; away he is led through the public streets amidst an innumerable multitude of spectators to Mount Calvary, the place of public execution. But exhausted by this time with a variety of the bitterest sorrows and excruciating pains, he fainted under the deadly weight of his cross. But accidentally meeting on the road one Simon of Cyrene, him they compelled to bear it after him. Now among the vast crowd which followed to this execution, there were many persons, especially women, the relations and acquaintances of Jesus and his Disciples, who could not behold this sad spectacle of suffering innocence without the bitterest grief and lamentation. When Jesus observed this, he lifted up his countenance bloody and disfigured, and said unto them, Ye daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me : I knew all this would come to pass, and I bear it with a patient resignation to the will of God : But weep for yourselves and for your children, for behold the days of vengeance are coming speedily upon this wicked nation, when the wretched parents shall say in the agony of distress, Blessed are the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never

gave

gave suck ; yea, so dreadful shall the desolation be, that they shall cry to the mountains, Fall upon us, and to the hills cover us ; for if God permits the innocent, for wise and good ends, to suffer so much infamy and torment as I now bear, how dreadful do you think shall be the vengeance of an offended God, when he comes in righteous judgment to punish this incorrigible nation ? These words he pronounced with an air of the most tender sorrow and compassion, not like an angry vindictive man who rejoices in the destruction of his enemies. In the mean time two criminals, convicted of robbery, were led to execution along with him. This was intended by the Chief Priests, the more effectually to impose upon the multitude, who might be induced thereby to believe that Jesus was as great a malefactor as they. At length he arrived at Golgotha, the fatal place where the guilty used to suffer the just reward of their deeds. Here some of his friends presented him a cup of wine mingled with myrrh, with a design to fortify his exhausted spirits, and render him insensible against the terrors of approaching death ; but this he refused to drink, being fully determined to suffer the worst that malice could inflict. Immediately he is stripped of his garments, lifted from the ground, and nailed to the cross, while streams of blood run down from his wounded hands and feet. In like manner the two thieves were crucified, the one on his right hand, and the other

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on his left. But that all might know him from those guilty wretches, an inscription was written by Pilate on the transverse beam of the cross, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, containing these words in capitals, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." At these words many of the Jews were highly offended, looking upon it as a public affront offered to their nation, and therefore they begged of the governor that he would write in their stead, the pretended King of the Jews: But he being highly provoked with their insolence already, and intending thus far to do justice to an innocent person, positively refused to make any alteration. No sooner was he fixed to the cross, than the four soldiers who were his executioners, began to divide his garments, which was all the property he had on earth. His inner coat being woven without any seam, they were unwilling to divide, and therefore cast lots whose it should be. While he hung in the most exquisite torments upon the cross, a strange mixture of mournful lamentations, and triumphant scorn was heard among the spectators. His afflicted friends bewailed his death in a flood of tears: But his cruel enemies insulted him with the bitterest scoffs and taunting reproaches; for thus they railed on him, saying, "Ah, thou base and deceitful man, who pretended to destroy our Temple, and build it in three days, give us a proof of your miraculous power now at this time, when you have

“ have so much need of it yourself ; come down
“ from the cross, if you are able . If you be the
“ Son of God, as you pretend, what should hinder
“ you ? But all your pretensions we see are vain—
“ He saved others, himself he cannot save : If
“ he be the King of Israel, why does he not
“ come down ? Let him once do that, and then
“ we’ll believe on him ; he trusted in God that
“ he would deliver him, but we see his vain pre-
“ sumption, for God regards him not.” To all
these insulking speeches he made no reply ; but
looking to the heavens with a countenance full
of the deepest sorrow, and expressive of the most
agonizing pain, he cried aloud, “ Father for-
“ give them, for they know not what they do.”

At the same time one of the robbers which were
crucified with him, being a man of a desperately
wicked and incorrigible temper, said to him in a
discontented and sullen manner ; If you be the
Messiah, why don’t you come down from the
cross and save yourself and us ? But the other,
who was of a quite different disposition, patient
under his sufferings, because he knew they were
just, attentive to the conduct of Jesus, convinced
of his innocence, and fully perswaded that he
was the Messiah, being shocked at the wicked-
ness of his companion, rebuked him, saying,
How can you be so void of the fear of God, and
so desperately insensible of your own condition,
as to insult a dying person, and one who is alto-
gether innocent ; while you and I are in the same
I 2 situation,

situation, and suffer only the just reward of our crimes. Then directing himself to Jesus, he said, Lord, I believe you to be the Messiah, and that after all your sufferings God will surely exalt you to a state of great honour and glory ; I beseech you, therefore, when you come to the possession of your kingdom, remember me, and have mercy upon me. Fear not, replied Jesus, for before this day be at an end, you shall be with me in the delightful Region of Paradise.

In the mean time, nigh the cross stood some of his relations and disciples, particularly his Mother, and her sister Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene, with John his beloved friend, all in the deepest sorrow bathed in tears. In the agonies of distress they gazed on every feature stained with blood, and felt, by sympathy, the pangs of their dying Lord. No language can describe his afflicted Mother, now a widow. In mournful silence she sat by the cross, nor could her eyes behold the sufferings of her tenderly beloved Son, groaning in torment, streaming with blood, dying like a slave, or as the vilest malefactor, murdered by the hands of cruel and wicked men, bearing all with meekness, praying for his enemies, submitting patiently to the will of God, and expiring with the most exalted hopes of a better world. Some times she would lift up her eyes to the cross on which he hung : But confounded at the mournful sight, her eyes suffused with a flood of tears, instantly she turned away
her

her face, and hid it in her garments, while her heaving breast could scarce contain her throbbing heart, almost broken with the agonies of wo.—All this he beheld from the Cross with the strongest emotions of sympathy and filial love. At length he addressed these words to his disconsolate mother : O Woman, thou tenderest of parents, whom I still regard with my dying breath, be not too much dejected on my account, for all shall be well, as I often told you ; behold the man who still possessed so great a share of my affection, regard him henceforth as your only son ; and you, my dearest friend, said he to John, regard her as your mother, and treat her with kindness when I am gone.

By this time the glorious lamp of day had gained his meridian height, when all of a sudden his radiant beams began to fade, his face grew pale, as if astonished at the wickedness of men, and filled with horror at the sufferings of the Son of God, he hid himself for three long hours behind the sable and melancholy veil of antient night. A gloomy horror sat on every brow of thoughtful men, and terror filled the human breast : The affrighted birds fled to their solitary habitations ; the lowing herds quitting their pasture, look'd with unusual sadness, and the flocks staring round, stood amazed at the unexpected night, while each domestic animal retir'd in haste to their wonted shelter.—Nature, in the deepest sorrow, laid aside her splendid robes of various colours, and covered all her works in the black-

est mourning ; the songs of angels ceased round the throne of God ; the heavenly legions reclining on the darkened clouds, beheld his sufferings with a mixture of sorrow, terror, admiration, and sympathetic love ; while the infernal powers, transformed into buzzing insects, danced with malignant joy, and hellish triumph o'er all the neighbouring hills. Yet in the midst of all their exultation they felt the tormenting agonies of disappointed rage, when they saw that nothing could discompose his mind, or inflame his temper with the least tincture of fell revenge, sullen discontent, or gloomy despair ; for during all this time he hung languishing in sorrow, and declining in strength, till three in the afternoon, then lifting his eyes to heaven, and pouring out his heart to God, he cried aloud, * “ My God, my
“ God, why hast thou forsaken me ; reproached
“ and insulted, tortured, and crucified by the
“ hands of ungrateful men ; they now think I
“ am abandoned and cast off by thee ; all that
“ see me laugh at my sorrows, and with insolent
“ scorn they ridicule my dying pains : But thou,
“ the everlasting friend of injured innocence oppressed, and afflicted virtue, thou art he who
“ sent me into this world, and all along hast
“ supported me. Now, in this my last, my
“ greatest agony and deepest distress ; thou
“ canst not, wilt not forsake thy well-beloved
“ son, in whom thou art always well pleased.

* Psalm xxii.

“ Behold,

“ Behold, O my Father, how my blood is poured
 “ out like water, my sinews are stretched, my
 “ bones are disjoined, my heart is melted with
 “ a burning heat, my strength is exhausted, my
 “ spirits fail, my tongue is parched with intole-
 “ rable thirst, the pangs of death take hold on
 “ my afflicted soul, and the sorrows of hell en-
 “ compass me about ; the assembly of the wicked
 “ have enclosed me, they pierced my hands and
 “ my feet. Be not far from me, O my God,
 “ make haste and help me when trouble is near,
 “ for there is none to help besides thee.” While
 he thus prayed, some who stood by, from the
 similitude of words, misapprehending what he
 meant, took occasion from thence to turn his
 prayer into ridicule, for they cried aloud, Now
 he calleth for Elias, let us see whither he will
 come and take him down. In like manner, when
 he complained of intolerable thirst, one of the
 soldiers dipt a sponge in vinegar mingled with
 wormwood and gall, and fixing it to a reed,
 reached it up to him on the Cross. As soon as
 he had tasted this bitter and abominable mixture,
 he turned away his head, and cried with a loud
 voice, not like the feeble accents of a dying man,
 but with the strong and masculine voice of one
 in perfect health : “ Now, my work is finished,
 “ and all my sorrows end, into thy hand, O
 “ gracious Father, I commit my departing Spi-
 “ rit.” Having uttered these words, he gently
 bowed his head and expired without a groan.

No sooner had he breathed his last, than the earth's foundations began to shake, Mount Calvary trembled, the solid rocks were rent asunder, and the sepulchres of the dead were exposed to view. The amazed spectators looked round them, while a deadly paleness, and ghastly terror sat on every face. Many condemned their own rashness, bewailed their guilt, and seemed fully convinced of his innocence, whom they had so basely delivered up to death; for now they shook their heads, smote upon their breasts, and wrung their guilty hands, while they returned with fearful perplexity, and strange conjectures back into the city. But the Roman centurion who commanded the soldiers that guarded him on the cross, after he had recovered a little from his panic, thus began:

Sure there never was such a day as this, a long and horrid darkness begun at noon, and scarce yet ended; the Moon in her full orb, and yet the Sun totally eclipsed. When he expired how dreadful was the earthquake! See that amazing cleft made in the solid rock—behold how the graves stand open!—the very dead are tossed out of their sepulchres; see the skulls, the various bones how they have been scattered here and there upon the hill! What can all this mean? The Gods are incensed against the actions of this day. All nature seemed to suffer with this man; doubtless he was the Son of God. Herod found no fault in him, neither did the governor, con-
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vinced of his innocence, all methods were tried to save his life, but all were in vain, no manner of proof could be found against him ; but the Jews were implacable. Such mildness of temper, join'd with such majestic looks, such a peaceful countenance, so much tranquillity, fortitude, and patience, under such base and injurious treatment, was never seen nor heard of before. Such a love to his country, such meekness and benevolence, even to his bitterest enemies and persecutors, such tender affections to his relations, such confidence in the Deity, hope and assurance of a future reward for all his sufferings ; all these show him to have been a man quite extraordinary. We admire Socrates ; Socrates was far inferior to this man ; he died like a Philosopher, but this man died like a God. Certainly he was the Son of God. How strong and majestic were his last words, not like those of a man quite exhausted with tedious and protracted wo ; but like a strong man in perfect health ; death seemed to wait on his pleasure, and one would think he died of his own accord ; not from necessity, but from choice ; not from want of strength, but because he inclined to live no longer among such wicked and ungrateful men. His whole conduct surprizes me, and the dreadful prodigies attending his death, confound me to such a degree, that I scarce know what to think of him : But this I am sure, he was a righteous man. Doubtless he was, said one of the soldiers, many wonderful

things have I heard of him before this time, and though I never gave credit to these reports, yet now I am inclined, from what I have seen this day, to believe all that I have heard of him; but there he hangs a sad spectacle of suffering innocence, and a victim to the envy of malicious Jews.

No sooner had Jesus expired on the cross, than immediately his soul entered Hades, or the world of departed Spirits. This is a vast and boundless region lying beyond the gates of death. This world is divided into two parts by a deep and bottomless gulph through which none can ever pass. That to the right, called Paradise, admits none but the just, who having passed through a state of trial upon earth, enter therein, and live in a state of pure intelligence, till after a certain period they enter again into their bodies, made then incorruptible and immortal. Into the left enter the souls of wicked men at death, there they are confined as in a doleful prison, till the end of this world, when they are again embodied, and suffer the full and adequate punishment of their crimes. In this state, excluded from the material world, the lively remembrance of their former actions and enjoyments remain continually in their view. Here conscious of the past, and fearful of the future, they suffer the most tormenting remorse. A strong imagination combines their various thoughts, and forms ten thousand different scenes of inexpressible anguish. An incessant
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train of horrible visions far more terrible than the dreams of a guilty wretch stained with innocent blood, passes in continual succession through their minds, from which they can never awake, till the sound of the last trumpet awakes them from the dead, to greater and more lasting pains. In Paradise, the righteous, tho' excluded from the world of sense and flesh, do nevertheless remember all that is past ; with joy they reflect upon every virtuous action, and triumph in the assured hope of a more perfect state of everlasting bliss. Here fancy, guided by the purest reason, forms innumerable scenes of ravishing delight. No painful thought, no tormenting passion, can ever disturb the sweet serenity of their minds ; nothing but social love, and mutual joy, and peaceful contemplation fill their souls with continual satisfaction. No dreams of purest innocence and perfect health, can be compared with that happy state of intellectual pleasure and mental enjoyment.

Here the soul of Jesus entered as soon as he expired on the cross. In a moment all his pains and sorrow fled away, he felt immortal joy, and inconceivable delight. As soon as he entered, thousands of blessed spirits saluted him with joyful congratulations : Hail, mighty Saint, they said, for greater thou appearest than all that ever pass'd the gates of death, we give thee welcome to this blessed world. All hail, he said again, to thronging multitudes which stood around him. On earth

earth no doubt many of you have heard of me, and longed for my appearance; and thou, Adam, first of men (for he then stood before the Messiah) thou great parent of the human race, I know thee well. It was I who promised to you in the Garden of Eden “that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent”: And thou, Abraham, my antient friend, it was I who promised “that in thy seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed.” With thee I conversed in the plains of Mamre, immediately before I destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha. And all ye holy Prophets, who foretold at different times the coming of the Messiah, it was I who gave you the spirit of inspiration; and lo I am the person of whom ye wrote. For when the fulness of the time was come, I laid aside my former glory, I took upon me the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. I am the seed of the woman, for I was born of a Virgin—I am the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, “a rod of the Stem of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots.” In me all your predictions are accomplished. I was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; I was wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities; I was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgressions of my people was I smitten; I came to mine own, but mine own received me not; blinded by their prejudices, and led astray by

by vicious passions, they condemned me to death as an Impostor ; my body even now hangs upon the cross, and here I arrive from the state of trial without spot and blemish. Ye have all passed the gates of death, and your bodies lie mingled with the dust ; here the exalted powers of your rational nature now act without controul in the state of pure intelligence ; but while ye remain entirely separated from the material world, your happiness must be incompleat, for in that world, which extends through boundless regions, the infinite perfections of my Father are displayed in an endless variety of objects, and amazing dispensations of providence. These ye cannot behold till again united with bodies refined, æthereal, and immortal. Your past experience on earth, now only supply the materials of your present reflection and enjoyment : But the time is coming when your minds shall be enlarged with new thoughts and entertainments flowing in an eternal succession of joys inconceivable. Here I am come to give you the assurance of that glorious and most perfect state which shall commence at the general resurrection ; and as a proof of this, I will in the space of three days return again to the earth, resume my former body, and within forty days after will I ascend to the imperial throne of my Father. No sooner shall I arise from the dead, than some of you shall follow me to life again, appear among men, and ascend with me into the heavens. This shall be
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to every one of you an earnest of your resurrection in due time, and of your final ascension to the regions of never-ending glory. In this manner did the Messiah instruct the inhabitants of Paradise, while every soul was filled with joy, and gratitude, and love, and pleasing admiration.

Now when the evening drew nigh, some of the Elders went to the Governor, and addressed him in the following words : Sir, as three malefactors have been crucified to-day, we beg the favour of you that an end may be put to their sufferings, and their bodies may be taken down from the cross : For according to our law, the bodies of the dead are not to be exposed to public view any longer than the day of their execution ; upon the evening we are commanded to bury them : Besides this, to-morrow is not only our Sabbath, but also one of our greatest festivals, and it would be highly improper that the joy of our people should be dash'd with the view of such disagreeable objects. This we know is generally done upon the festivals of the Emperor, and we hope you will now grant our request. To this he readily consented, and away they went. But least any deceit should be committed, they thought it proper to see the execution of the Governor's order themselves. Accordingly, when they arrived at Mount Calvary, they beheld the two thieves groaning with the most agonizing pain. Immediately their legs were broken, and an end put to their torments ; but no symptoms of life appearing

ing in Jesus, they thought it unnecessary to break his legs. However, one of the Elders observed that possibly he might be in a fainting fit, that he certainly could not be dead so soon. And therefore to remove all suspicion, and put an end to all disputes, one of the soldiers thrust a spear into his side, and pierced his heart till the blood and water gushed from the wound.

During all this time his disconsolate friends still remained in view of the cross, waiting with impatience to see how his body would be disposed of. As soon therefore as it was taken down from the cross, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took it into their possession. For immediately after the darkness and earthquake which attended his death, these two, along with the multitude returned into the city; and he who had so warmly opposed the resolutions of the Sanhedrim, went directly to the Governor, and spoke to him in the following words :

Sir, you have seen to-day with how much cruelty and implacable malice that righteous man has been put to death. Constrained by the fury of an enraged mob, which nothing could resist, you were obliged to deliver him into their hands. You have heard how many wonderful things he did when alive, and now you have seen what wonders attended his death; the unnatural darkness and terrible earthquake do abundantly confirm your declaration of his innocence; the darkness ceased, and the earth trembled as soon as he expired.

expired. A great many seem now to relent, the dreadful prodigies of this day have brought them to a sense of their crime, and now, when it is too late, they are sorry for his death. I always dissented from the prosecution of that extraordinary man ; but as you well know it was dangerous to speak openly in his favour, his enemies have obtained their desire. Possibly they may insist further, that his body should be cast into the public chanel houses of the dead : He has already suffered too much disgrace ; let him now in testimony of your esteem have at least an honourable burial. This I intend to bestow upon him, and for that purpose I earnestly beg that his body, by your order, may be delivered to me. The Governor surprized to hear that he was already dead, made strict enquiry into the truth of the matter, and finding it to be really so, he accordingly granted the request. Immediately after this, Joseph went to provide fine linen, while Nicodemus purchased an hundred pounds weight of myrrh and aloes for embalming his body. Having provided all things necessary, they went to Mount Calvary, where they arrived just as the soldiers were breaking the legs of the two thieves ; and having delivered the orders of the Governor, they took down the body, and wrapped it in the linen, with the spices according to the manner of the embalming commonly used to rich and honourable persons among the Jews. After which in mournful silence they carried it along to an adjacent

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cent garden belonging to Joseph, where he had provided a new Sepulchre for himself, hewn with great labour and expence out of the solid rock. This was cut in the form of a small chamber almost square within, being eight feet and an inch high, six feet and an inch broad, fifteen feet and ten inches long. The door which was towards the east, was four feet high, two feet and four inches wide. In this sepulchre the body of Jesus was deposited, after which they closed the door with a large stone two yards and a quarter long, one yard broad and one thick, and then returned into the city.

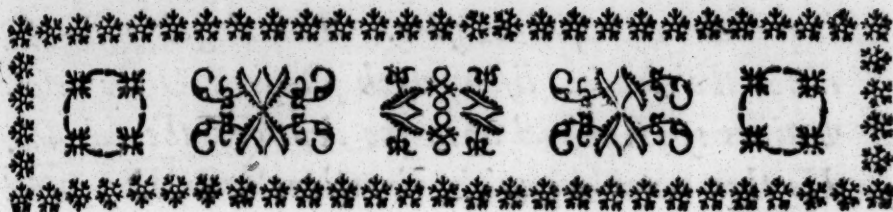
In the mean time Mary Magdalene and the other women who were present at his death, being afraid, stood at a distance while his body was taken down and embalmed, nor would they venture near to the sepulchre, but stood afar off and beheld the place of his burial. But as soon as they returned into the city, not knowing the honour that was done to their Lord, they went to purchase the necessary ingredients for embalming his body, intending to apply them as soon as the Sabbath was over. The transactions of this day afforded abundant materials of conversation and dispute. The chief Priests, the elders and Pharisees who had carried on the prosecution with such obstinate malice, ascribed the darkness and earthquake to the divine displeasure against Jesus for his blasphemy : While many of the multitude enraged against them, and terrified at the
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signs they had seen, began boldly to affirm that God was angry against their Nation for the death of that righteous man. His disciples and friends were disconsolate, fearful and silent. The public confession and terrible death of Judas Iscariot was universally known, and very much insisted on by all who were inclined to think favourably of his Master. But those who were engaged in the pursuit of sensual pleasures, or swallowed up in the cares of this world, seemed to give little attention to any of these things.



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B O O K VII.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

Upon the night after the Crucifixion the Devils assemble upon Mount Tabor, where Satan offers his conjectures concerning the Resurrection of Jesus, and proposes schemes to frustrate the evidences by which it might be supported. Upon the Sabbath-evening the Chief Priests appoint a guard
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to watch the Sepulchre. The Disciples meet together, the conversation of Peter and John concerning their deceased Master. The Angels assembled above the clouds, listen with pleasure to the observations of Raphael upon the death of the Messiah. He then concludes with directions how they should act at the time of his Resurrection.

NO sooner had sable night covered the face of nature with her dark and melancholy veil, than Satan with his infernal Peers assembled on Mount Tabor, and thus in sullen majesty revealed the counsels of his heart.

Ye Gods and Rulers of this lower world, attend to what I say : We have now seen with pleasure the good effects of our past deliberations ; the Son of God is dead, and lies confin'd within the bosom of yonder Rock. Yet after all, our Victory is far from being compleat, we have only subdued his mortal part, a frail system of organized matter : This, I fear, will avail us no more than if we had blasted a kid upon the mountains ; his virtue remains unconquered even in death itself. His obedience to God, and love to men, have only been rendered more conspicuous and amazing, by a variety of the deepest sufferings ; so that instead of being victors, upon mature reflection, I doubt we are rather the vanquished party. His death would certainly be of the last importance to our interest, could we by any means detain him in the grave ; but that

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is beyond the reach of our power. He oftentimes foretold his resurrection, and should that come to pass, as doubtless it will, I dread to think what the consequences may be; for if all the nations of the earth are to be blessed in him, then it is evident, that all nations must confess him to be the Son of God, and should that come to pass, we can expect nothing but a total expulsion from the earth, and a miserable confinement in that infernal lake from whence we have escaped. Let us therefore suppose him risen from the dead, to whom will he appear? It must either be to the whole nation as publicly as he did before, or only to his own Disciples. Let us consider what possibly may happen from both these suppositions. If he should appear to the whole nation, and converse familiarly with all sorts of men, then in this case, they will either believe on him, or they will not; if they should believe on him, then our authority over the Jewish nation must be entirely lost; and more than that, for the purity of his doctrine, the power of his miracles, and the sanctity of his life, together with the united testimony of Jews and Gentiles, who saw him publicly condemned and put to death; all these taken together, may occasion a total revolt of all nations from our authority. Upon this supposition we have no other way to secure our interest but this, namely, to persuade our subjects in remote nations, that the story of his death is a meer fiction, invented by

by his countrymen to impose upon the world. Further, if his resurrection be necessary to convince the Jews that he is the Son of God, the same degree of evidence must be necessary also to convince every other nation in the world; and therefore upon this supposition, he must also be put to death, and rise again in every other country as well as in Judea. But sure this will never be granted, and therefore as the proof of this extraordinary fact must depend entirely upon the testimony of a nation universally despised, and already judged too credulous in matters of this kind, we have reason to hope that by a proper management of their prejudices, our faithful subjects will give no credit to such an improbable relation. Yea, supposing he should appear as public as ever, may we not with good reason expect, that the Chief Priests, the Elders, many of the Scribes and Pharisees, but especially the whole sect of the Sadducees, would even after his appearance, still deny him to be the Messiah. They have already opposed the strongest evidences of his divine commission, when he healed their diseased and raised their dead. His own Resurrection will be only another miracle of the same kind with the former, and the same motives which engaged them to reject him before, may prevail with them to reject him again. We know that the strongest arguments have little weight when inconsistent with mens temporal interests and inclinations. And therefore if he should

should appear publicly to the whole nation, we must endeavour to persuade them that he was taken down from the cross before he was actually dead, having only fainted with exquisite pain, and that having been delivered into the hands of his friends, by proper care he was again recovered. This will be the more credible, when they consider how improbable it is that he should have expired so soon, and that when the legs of the two thieves were broken, no violence was done to him. Now should the Jews be once prevailed on to believe this, then might we expect to see him again treated as a deceiver, and all possible attempts made to destroy him. But supposing the evidences of his resurrection to be as strong as possible, as irresistible as in the case of Lazarus, yet by a proper management of their passions and prejudices, we may expect they will still persevere in their opposition against him, and support our interest notwithstanding all he can do. There is yet another thing which inclines me to hope, that upon the supposition of his appearing in public, they will not believe on him, that is, his prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish nation. These events plainly suppose that they will still look upon him as an Impostor.

Let us now consider what may be the consequence of his appearing only to his Disciples, which I am inclined to believe will be the case, from his own words, “ The world seeth me no
“ more,

“ more, but ye shall see me ;” in that case then, the truth of his resurrection must depend upon their testimony alone. This I hope will be little regarded by the Jewish nation, for who will believe a fact so improbable upon the words of a few contemptible fishermen ? Accordingly, foreseeing this himself, he told them, “ if they have rejected me, they will also reject you.” We may hope then not only to see their testimony despised, but themselves also persecuted and put to death. This I am sure they cannot bear ; and if we may judge of their future conduct by the past, we have no reason to fear any danger from them. One betrayed him, another denied him, and all the rest forsook him in distress. There is therefore no reason to believe that ever they will discover any true fortitude in the support of his cause. However, to weaken their testimony in favour of his resurrection, we must endeavour to persuade the Jews that his Disciples stole him away in the night, and invented the story of his resurrection, only to support their credit, and impose upon the world. This will no doubt be received as an incontestible fact by all who continue in their prejudices against him. I rejoice to think how matters will then stand ; a few contemptible persons, without learning, or wealth, power, or interest, must stand in opposition to the whole world ; they must endeavour to persuade the Jewish nation to receive for their Messiah a condemned malefactor. This is repugnant to all
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their expectations ; for however much the multitude might have been inclined to favour his cause when alive, there is no reason to fear that ever they will promote his interest after his death. The same indignation that was directed against himself, will then fall upon his Disciples and friends. If they remain in their native country, their testimony will soon perish with their lives ; if they fly into other nations, what can they do ? how shall they propagate their doctrine among a people with whom they can not converse ? Or even supposing they could, who will believe what they say ? Will the nations of the world abandon their religion, in which they have been educated, and so long confirmed, a religion supported by the imperial authority, embellished by the fabulous inventions of the poets, and held in veneration by the most learned philosophers. Will the world, I say, give up their religion at the desire of a few contemptible Jews, persecuted and banished their native country ? Or will they receive a Religion quite new, and published among an obscure people, by a man condemned and crucified as a malefactor ? Will they receive such a religion as this ? A religion inconsistent with all their former opinions, contrary to their established customs, directly opposite to their passions, worldly interests and inclinations, is it probable they will ever do this ? Surely this would be the greatest of all miracles, and yet all this must be done, if ever our interest should fail, or the Messiah's

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kingdom be established upon earth. But all this is improbable to the last degree ; and therefore we may hope that the consequences of his resurrection will not be so fatal as at first view we might apprehend. Let us therefore use all our skill and activity to strengthen the prejudices of men, to blind their understandings against the clearest evidence ; let us add new force to every passion, heighten every appetite, and confirm our faithful subjects in their obedience to our authority. If these instructions should be thought too general, we are under the necessity of waiting till after his resurrection, when new occurrences may suggest new measures for consulting our own safety, or blasting the designs of our enemy. In the mean time let us depart, and carefully observe what passes in Jerusalem, attend to the various conjectures and reflections of the Priests and people concerning the Messiah and his Disciples. We may now enter the city, and safely go through every corner, since he, whose frown made us once afraid, lies dead and buried in his grave.

At these words they mount upon the wing, and in number as the locusts, they light in Jerusalem, pass through every street, enter every house, and in the secret chambers they lodge unseen, watchfully observing all that is said or done, by friends or foes. In the mean time the afflicted Disciples are dispersed through the city : With sorrow, disappointment, and anxious fear, they passed the lonely night in broken slumbers, and dreams of

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sad distress, till with the first dawn they arose, and according to the law they piously observed that holy rest which had been appointed the sacred memorial of the world's creation, and Israel's redemption from the land of Egypt.

Now when the evening began to approach with oblique rays, and the declining sun drew near the western hills, the Priests assembled in the Temple on further consultation what to do ; for still they laboured under strange fears and painful conjectures about what might come to pass. When they had all sat down in the council-chamber, the High Priest arose, and thus addressed his brethren :

Ye Rulers of Israel, and sacred Ministers of the most High, I am obliged to make known to you the result of my secret thoughts, and to beg your advice in a matter which demands our most serious consideration. You cannot be ignorant of the fearful omens which attended the death of that blasphemous Impostor ; you saw the dreadful eclipse which lasted so long ; the rocks rent, the earth trembled, the graves opened, and an invisible hand has rent asunder our sacred veil : These awful prodigies may operate strangely upon the timorous imaginations of the ignorant multitude. What may yet happen, and what pernicious effects these may have upon their minds, we cannot tell : One thing we are sufficiently apprized of, and what we ought carefully to watch against. While that Deceiver was alive

he boldly affirmed that on the third day he would rise again from the dead. Now should this come to pass, we are undone; the multitude in that case will regard him as the Messiah, and treat us as the worst of murderers. Our interest and authority must then perish, and our lives be in the utmost danger. But though we have no reason to believe that he will rise again, yet it is very possible that some strange piece of deceit may be acted by his Disciples. Let us endeavour to prevent every thing of that kind. By the orders of Pilate, his body, I am told, was delivered to some of his friends, who have buried it in a garden nigh to the place of his execution. How do we know that by this time they have carried it away with no other design but to conceal it, till the third day, and then shewing the empty Sepulchre, pretend that he is risen from the dead. Such a story as this, after such strange things have happened, may possibly gain credit among the giddy and unthinking people, and if it should, it may produce dreadful effects. To prevent this, it is necessary to examine the Sepulchre this evening; if the body be already gone, his prediction is false, and his Disciples are determined to carry on the imposture: But if his body yet remains in the Sepulchre, who knows but his Disciples may steal it away before the morning, and then report that he rose again according to his promise. In order to prevent this, it is highly expedient that a strong guard be fixed on the place to watch it during

during the night; besides, the guard can inform us of whatever may happen, and according to *that*, our measures must be taken for the future. Let us therefore apply to the Governor, that by his authority a watch may be appointed till the third day be expired. This is my advice, and if ye judge it worthy of approbation, let us proceed with all possible expedition. To this they all agreed; and accordingly immediate application was made to the Governor in the following words.

Sir, we have seriously thought of one thing spoken by that Deceiver while he was yet alive: After three days, said he, I will rise again. Now, though we have no reason to believe his words, yet his Disciples who are engaged in the same cause with himself, may possibly come in the night, remove his body, and then pretend that he is risen from the dead. Should this gain credit among the people, the spirit of tumult and sedition may rise to such a degree of fury, that no authority will be able to keep them in subjection. In order therefore to provide against the worst that may happen, we have thought it necessary to apply to you, that a guard may be appointed to watch the Sepulchre till the third day be expired. To this the Governor replied, I am very much surprized at your conduct, in giving me and yourselves so much unnecessary trouble about that man whose life and death have been so extraordinary. Ye hated him when alive, and now ye are afraid of his Disciples when he is

dead ; your actions are unaccountable : His Disciples must either be very few, or else they are of a timorous and peaceful disposition ; for I observed yesterday when the multitude preferred a murderer to him, that there was not so much as one to speak a word in his favour. You are afraid lest his Disciples should come in the night, and steal away his body ; but to what purpose will they steal it ? Do you imagine they can restore it to life ? Surely no ; if they remove it, it can only be with a design to bury it else where, which I suppose they will never do. But you apprehend they will deceive the people, and make them believe he is risen from the dead, Can you really imagine they are so mad as to affirm this, or the people so destitute of common sense as to believe them ? Their villainy and deceit would then appear to all the world. What could they gain by it ? nothing but universal contempt, and perhaps an infamous death like their Master. Your apprehensions therefore are altogether groundless ; nevertheless, to gratify your unaccountable humour in this, as well as in other things, I am willing to grant your request. You have already a watch appointed to prevent tumults in the City ; go therefore and charge them in my name to guard the Sepulchre, under pain of death, as long as you think proper. Having now obtained their request, they departed, and instantly assembled the guard, marched directly to the Sepulchre, rolled away the stone, and found the
body

body wrapt in linen, cold and lifeless as Joseph had left it the day before. Immediately they closed up the entrance again, and to prevent any collusion between the Soldiers and the Disciples, a seal was fixed upon it joining the stone and the solid rock, insomuch that none could break it without a discovery. The guard being now placed at the Sepulchre, and every thing secured beyond the possibility of deceit, the Priests returned home, while glimmering twilight hovered on the mountains. In the mean time the Disciples were privately assembled in the house where they had eaten the Passover. With disconsolate hearts they mutually conversed about their deceased Master. Peter recollecting these words of his Lord, "when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren," thought himself under particular obligations to comfort them as much as was in his power: He therefore addressed them in the following words.

My dear brethren, and companions in sorrow, our present situation is truly perplexing and dangerous. Our beloved Master is now gone, condemned and put to death as a deceiver, he has suffered as a criminal and a slave the most infamous tortures of the cross. The multitude who once admired him, have abandoned his interest, and chosen a murderer in his stead. But why do I condemn the multitude? Are we better than they? Did not Judas betray him, did not we all forsake him in the time of danger? and with a

ter heart, and shameful countenance I here confess my crime. I basely denied him, and confidently swore that I never knew him. All this he foretold as plainly as words could do : I sincerely repent of my crime, and abhor myself in dust and in ashes. I have now these three years and more been intimately acquainted with him, admitted into his familiar conversation, heard his public instructions, seen his miracles, and observed all his actions. His life was spotless, his doctrines pure and holy, his miracles astonishing, and all his conduct worthy of the most sincere approbation. Had I observed any thing like cunning or imposture in his behaviour, I should never have bewailed his death, but would have rejoiced at my escape from the dangerous snares of such an artful deceiver. I know the uprightness of his character, I have in a thousand instances seen the goodness of his heart. Tho' he hath suffered an ignominious death upon the cross, I am still perswaded he was the Son of God, the true Messiah, and the King of Israel. It is impossible he could have been a deceiver : If God ever sent a Prophet into the world, he surely must have been one ; the purity of his doctrines, and the sanctity of his life, do abundantly discover his fervent love to God and men ; his miracles and fore-knowledge of future events do sufficiently prove the divinity of his commission. Often has he told us that he would suffer many things of the Chief Priests, the Scribes and Pharisees, and

at last be crucified : Yea, I well remember now, that at the time when he was transfigured upon the Mount, Moses and Elias appeared in their glory, and conversed with him about his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. These things are now come to pass, and they are to me a sufficient demonstration that he was no deceiver. God himself can never deceive us, for I heard his voice from the excellent glory, saying, “ this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.” It is impossible that any man could undertake to deceive the world, and yet in the mean time clearly foresee and plainly foretel that he would perish in his undertaking. This is inconsistent with all the principles of human nature ; such a deceit never was, nor never can be practised. And yet what to think I know not, for after all we are surely disappointed in our expectations, we thought he would have redeemed Israel from the power of the Romans, established us in the possession of our antient liberties, conquered all nations, as the Prophets have foretold, and reigned for ever a great and universal king. But now he has trod the dismal path from whence none ever returns. It is true, when he was alive, he raised Lazarus from the dead, but now there is none to raise himself. I am in the greatest perplexity concerning him ; a Prophet he surely was, a Deceiver he could not be : We believed him to be the Messiah, and yet all our expectations from him

are at an end. He told us he would leave the world and go to the Father : I have heard of men appearing after their death, have we any reason to expect this ? I remember what he said a few nights ago “ A little while and ye shall not see “ me, and again a little while and ye shall see “ me, because I go unto the Father.” But what if he should appear as some say departed spirits have done ? What expectations could we have from that ? Will he redeem Israel from servitude, conquer the world, and reign over it in that condition ? No, that can never be, the Messiah, when he comes, shall abide for ever. In short, the more I think of this matter, the more I am involved in darkness and confusion. As our Master is now dead, we may expect to be treated with scorn and contempt by all the nation, and who knows but after the feast, they may apprehend, and put us to death also. Perhaps he meant this much when he said, “ Behold I send “ you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves.” Let us therefore consult our own safety, return to Galilee, follow our occupations as formerly, and pass the remaining part of our lives in a sorrowful obscurity, regarding him as a great Prophet, imitating his example, and bewailing his untimely death.

As soon as he had ended, John, the beloved Disciple, expressed himself in the following words.

He

He was certainly no deceiver : What you just now observed sufficiently proves that. “ Behold, “ I send you forth as lambs in the midst of “ wolves, ye shall be hated of all nations for my “ names sake ; yea, the time cometh when he “ that killeth you shall think he doeth God service.” These are not the words of a deceiver. Had he flattered us with the hopes of great prosperity, wealth, and worldly grandeur, we might indeed complain that he had deceived us, we might then justly abandon his interest, and approve of all that the Chief Priests have done against him. And yet it is impossible to do that ; we indeed expected great things from him, but all our hopes are disappointed ; and yet we cannot accuse him, for he told us every thing would come to pass just as it has. How could he have foretold these things, if he had not come from God ? He never sought after riches, honour, and dominion over men, he never promised to confer these upon us ; “ The Son of man came not to “ be ministered unto, said he, but to minister, “ and to give his life a ransom for many, if they “ have persecuted me, they will also persecute “ you.” The great design he seemed always to have in view was only the reconciling of men to God, and uniting them to one another in the bonds of peace and love. No deceiver would ever engage in such an honourable work as this. How easily could he have shunned his enemies, before they apprehended him in the garden ; yet he

he would not fly, neither would he defend himself by a miracle even when it was in his power. Did you not observe how his words confounded them, and made them fall prostrate on the ground? he would suffer none to fight in his defence. You may remember the reason he assigned for his conduct, "The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink? No man taketh my life from me, I lay it down of my self." When Malchas was wounded, did you not see how in a moment he healed the wound? I beheld with amazement and the deepest sorrow his wonderful meekness and patience in the palace of the High Priest; I heard him pray for his enemies in the agonies of death, and with his last words commend his spirit into the hands of his Father. Such actions as these are altogether inconsistent with the character of an Impostor: He must therefore be the very person he declared himself to be, the Son of God, the long expected Messiah. What hopes shall we now entertain in these melancholy circumstances? Can any thing but his own promise give us hope? "I will see you again," said he, and your hearts shall rejoice." He promised to rise again from the dead, but will he rise from the grave as Lazarus did? There is no probability in that; for if he should, he might be exposed to the same treatment he has met with already: His enemies are implacable beyond the reach of conviction; did they not resolve to put Lazarus to death again, even after they had received

ceived the most undeniable proofs of the reality of his resurrection ? Lazarus we know is yet a frail mortal just as he was before : Let us never hope for such a resurrection as his. I well remember by what argument he proved the doctrine of a future state against the Sadducees ; “ Have ye not read, said he, the words of God to Moses at the burning bush, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ; God is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to him.” It appears then from this manner of reasoning, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are alive to God, and therefore are risen from the dead. In the same sense no doubt our Master is risen from the dead, and gone to Paradise, according to his own words upon the cross. We may therefore entertain the hopes of his appearing to us again, perhaps in the same manner as Moses and Elias appeared to him on the holy Mount, and conversed with him. This much, I think, is imply'd in these words, “ I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice :” Let us therefore still believe in him, notwithstanding all that has come to pass, and hope for his appearance, when perhaps he will accomplish all our expectations, and crown our hopes with triumphant joy. Having in this manner conversed for a long time, they ended with prayer, and then retired to their wonted rest.

During

During this time the exalted Principalities of heaven assembled above the clouds, waited for the approaching day, and passed the silent hours of night, in calm reflections on the various conduct of wicked men, and on the sufferings of the Messiah. Upon this occasion the Archangel Raphael made the following remarks, while ten thousand Legions listened with keen attention to all his Words. We have now, said he, beheld the most amazing Tragedy that ever was acted in the dominions of God. We have seen him who once in heaven scattered terror and desolation among the Apostate Angels, led a prisoner upon earth, and basely insulted by the sons of men. We have seen him whose face did once shine above the brightness of the firmament, treated with all the marks of the most spiteful indignity. We have seen him who was once crowned with glory, disgraced with a wreath of thorns; him who was the image of the invisible God, made a spectacle of horror to the children of men. We have seen him who was the admiration of Angels and the terror of Devils, despised and persecuted by the sons of earth. The Lord of glory covered with shame, and the Prince of life expiring on a cross; yet in all these sufferings neither the terrors nor allurements of this world could corrupt his heart, neither Devils nor wicked men could stain the purity of his mind. From henceforth shall his spotless character be the great standard of perfection, and the pattern of imita-
tion

tion to Angels and men. Of all the crimes ever committed on Earth we have now beheld the greatest, the Son of God and heir of all things, rejected and murdered by the people whom he came to save. There is no madness like that of Sin ; it brought confusion into heaven above, and misery among the inhabitants of this earth. This monster would devour the whole creation, and, if possible, would dethrone, and even destroy the Almighty Sovereign. What a complication of wickedness have we seen in the conduct of the Jews ! What amazing humility ! what unshaken fortitude ! what unruffled meekness ! and inextinguishable love have we beheld in the sufferings of the Messiah. Here we may contemplate with admiration the divine wisdom and goodness in permitting these sufferings, for the more glorious manifestation of such exalted virtues. We have seen the riches of divine love in the death of his own Son, for the redemption of a rebellious world : If any thing can produce the love of God in the souls of men, this will surely do it. We have now seen the seed of the woman bruise the head of the infernal Serpent. The first Adam was easily seduced, but the second Adam is invincible, and hath now obtained the most glorious victory over the powers of darkness. The human race may now behold in the strongest light how abominable in the sight of God all and every kind of wickedness must be, when he sent his Son into the world, and exposed him

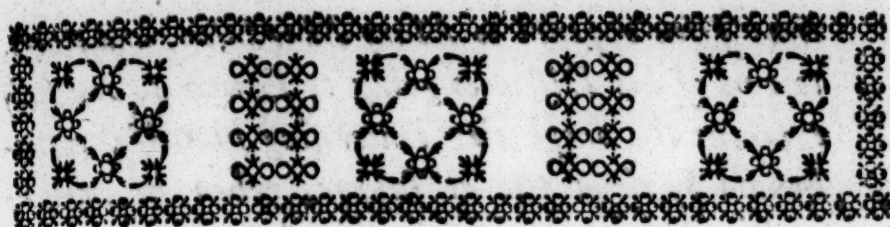
him to a variety of the greatest sorrows, and the most painful death, with a design to put an end to its dominion, overturn the empire of Satan, and establish a kingdom of everlasting truth and righteousness in its stead. They may now see, that nothing is so delightful and acceptable in the sight of God as virtue and goodness of heart, when for the sake of the most perfect obedience, and spotless virtue of his own Son, he is willing to forgive all penitent sinners who turn from the evil of their doings. For the sake of his obedience all necessary means of obtaining everlasting happiness shall be freely given to a corrupt and rebellious world. We have seen the only meritorious and all sufficient sacrifice offered up for the sins of men. All other sacrifices were only types and shadows of this, and therefore they shall in a little time cease. In fine, the sufferings of the Messiah are of the greatest advantage both to us in the heavenly world, and to men upon earth; because they have a tendency to confirm us in our present happy integrity, to reform the human race, and exalt them at last to be our everlasting companions. With good reason therefore may we sing now, as we did on the day of his nativity, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men."

But now the time draws near when he must rise again from the dead, according to his promise. His resurrection is an event of the last importance,

importance, and therefore must be confirmed by the strongest evidence. To the Jews he will not appear, that is a favour they are utterly unworthy of. His Disciples only shall be the witnesses of his Resurrection, and their testimony will be sufficient to support the truth of this fact to all the impartial lovers of truth and righteousness. And as for those who are hardened in their wickedness, no evidence will be sufficient to reclaim them. In the morning early, certain women who followed him from Galilee, have agreed to meet at the Sepulchre, with a design to embalm his body. Neither they nor any of his Disciples have any hope of his rising from the dead, and they are ignorant of the Roman guard now standing at the Sepulchre. In order therefore that these may have free access, and a full opportunity of examining every circumstance, let us with the dawning light descend into the garden, for so the Almighty Father commands us. At that time the soul of the Messiah shall return from Paradise, break the bands of death, and shake the foundations of Mount Calvary. Then with a gentle touch will I remove the stone from the door of the Sepulchre : There will I sit clothed in celestial splendor while he rises from the dead, and leaves the dark confinement of the tomb. His person I will attend, and all of us shall wait his commands, while with exalted joy we publish his victory over hell and death. As soon as I appear, the guard shall lose their senses with excessive

cessive terror, and become as dead men. But when we are gone, they shall awake, fly into the city, and relate the wonders they have seen. The strange report shall run through every street, and crowds assemble at the tomb, where the presumptive evidences of his Resurrection shall appear exceeding strong, and prepare every impartial mind to receive the testimony of his Disciples.





THE
MESSIAH.

BOOK VIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Before the sun-rising the Angels descend into the Garden. The Resurrection of the Messiah, the terror of the guards, the Angels publish his Resurrection to the women, and they to the Apostles; their different conjectures and reasonings upon that subject. The guard informs the Chief Priests, their conduct upon that occasion. Upon the report of

of the Soldiers many assemble at the Sepulchre; the reasoning of John a Sadducee, and Joseph concerning the report of the watch. Before this time Jesus appears to Mary Magdalen, and others, to two of his Disciples going to Emmaus, and fully explains the prophecies concerning himself; is unknown by them till at supper, when he immediately disappears. After this he appears to the Apostles in Jerusalem, while Thomas was absent, and again, while he was present, orders them to meet him in Galilee, where they all withdrew.

WHEN the morning light began to dawn through the eastern sky, and usher in the day, a day pregnant with an event more illustrious and important, than any to be met with in the annals of our World since its first Creation; Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James, set out from their habitations, with fond desire to visit the Sepulchre of their deceased Lord; when lo! the Angelic host descends into the garden. No sooner had they lighted on the Earth than its foundations began to shake; the guard astonished looked round, but saw nothing, till they observed the Stone rolling spontaneous from the door of the Sepulchre. Surprized at this, they retired a few steps backward, when in a moment their eyes were confounded with an amazing splendor; for now, Raphael sat upon the Stone, his garments seemed of the purest white, and dreadful lightnings blazed around his face.

face : The Soldiers saw him, and with insupportable terror they fell like dead men to the ground. While they remained thus insensible, Jesus brake asunder the bands of death ; a number of Angels within the Sepulchre, beheld with joyful admiration, his body animated with renewed life ; instantly he awoke as from the soundest sleep, while the Angel Gabriel, having stript him of the linen clothes, and napkin that was about his head, arrayed him in celestial robes, which, like his body, could either transmit or reflect the rays of light, according as he chose to become visible or invisible. Immediately he slept majestic from the tomb, while ten thousand cherubims surround his person, and bending lowly to the earth, they said, Welcome, O Son of God, a joyful welcome to life eternal, to everlasting bliss, and highest honour, the just reward of all thy glorious deeds. A sweet and smiling beauty sat upon his face, strongly expressive of conscious worth, divine Majesty, and universal love ; he looked on all with a pleasing approbation, and every one beheld him with ravishing delight. Away he goes, attended by the angelic train, and directs his course to the graves of many favourite Saints : When he arrived, he stood, and with a mild majestic voice he said, Awake, my friends, and come to life : They heard his voice, they started from the dust, with manly vigour, active joints and limbs, and blooming beauty smiled in every face. They beheld his countenance with grateful

grateful admiration, they fell prostrate before him, and kissed his feet who had given them life.

In the mean time, the Soldiers who guarded the Sepulchre, awaking from their trance, fled directly into the city; while Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James called on Salome by the way: Now as these three advanced towards the Sepulchre, and talked of embalming their Lord, one of them said, Who shall remove the stone from the door of the Sepulchre? for at his burial the united force of twenty men could scarce fix it there; if we have not strength sufficient, when the rest of the women are assembled, we must call for the assistance of his Disciples. While they talked in this manner, as they drew near, they beheld with amazement the Stone already removed, and the entrance quite open. What can this mean, said Mary Magdalen, certainly a number of persons must have been here before us, the door is open, the body is gone; but by whom, and for what end, I cannot conjecture. I will now return, and inform his Disciples; in the mean time, go ye to the Sepulchre and wait, least Joanna and the rest of the women should arrive before I come back again. Accordingly with all expedition she went to Peter and John, while the other two advanced, and immediately entering the Sepulchre, they saw an Angel sitting on the right hand clothed in a long white garment. At the sight of him they were surprized and terrified.

Immediately

Immediately he said to them, be not afraid, I know whom ye seek, it is Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; he is not here, he is risen from the dead, behold the place where they laid him: But go your way, and tell his Disciples, especially Peter, behold he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him, as he told you before his death. At these words they went out, and fled from the Sepulchre, trembling with fear, and amazed at what had been told them. A little after they had departed, came Peter and John, whom they had seen running at a distance; but they spoke not a word to them, for they were confounded with terror and surprize. These two Disciples being informed by Mary Magdalen of what she saw and suspected, came with speed almost breathless to the Sepulchre, but John, being the younger, had got a considerable way before his companion. When he arrived at the door, he stooped down, and looked in, and saw the dead clothes lying, but did not enter: But as soon as Peter came he went in, and saw the napkin that was about his head not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then entered John also, and when he had seen these circumstances, together with the report of Mary Magdalen, he believed that his Master was certainly risen from the dead. Having now examined every thing about the Sepulchre, they returned home again. As they walked by the way, John spoke to his companion in the following manner.

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When I consider, said he, the various circumstances I have heard and seen, I cannot doubt the truth of his resurrection ; for though you and Mary Magdalen suppose him to have been stolen away in the darkness of the night, yet this to me seems altogether improbable ; for who would steal him ? Not his friends, surely, for what could they propose to do with him ? Has he not been buried with honour by Joseph and Nicodemus ? What could they mean by stripping him of the dead clothes ? These doubtless they would have carried along with them, and is it to be supposed they would have taken so much time and pains to remove the linen and the napkin, and lay them so carefully in separate places ? No, surely, had they intended to remove his body, they would have done it with all possible expedition, and just as they found it ; and had it been done by friends, would they not have told us, and called for our assistance ? For reasons equally strong, I cannot believe that any of his enemies would have stolen him away, and left the spices, the winding-sheet and the napkin behind : Besides, consider how large the stone is which closed the entrance ; no fewer than twenty men could have removed it, nor can I conceive for what end they would have done it. He is certainly risen from the dead ; this only can account for what has happened, and seems to agree with his own words, After three days I will rise again. To all this Peter listened attentively ; but many difficulties

difficulties arising in his mind, he still continued in great suspense, being fully determined to withhold his assent till the strongest evidence should oblige him to submit.

After these two had departed from the Sepulchre, Mary Magdalen who had been some time behind them, arrived there again, and in the deepest sorrow with tears in her eyes she stooped down, and looking in she beheld two Angels clothed in white, sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Immediately one of them said to her, Woman, why do you look with such a sorrowful and despairing countenance? To which she, entirely swallowed up of sorrow, answered, Because some persons unknown have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. Immediately she turned about, and saw Jesus himself standing before her clothed in a manner she had never seen before, and therefore appeared to her as an entire stranger, who asked her, Woman, why do you weep, and whom do you seek in this place? She, supposing him to be the gardener, replied, The body of Jesus was lately deposited in this Sepulchre, now it is gone, but by whom I know not; and therefore, sir, if you know any thing about it, or have removed it yourself, please to inform me, that I may take proper care of it? At these words, Jesus, with a familiar tone of voice, called her by her name; Instantly she looked in his face, and knowing his features
I, perfectly

perfectly well, with a joyful surprize, she fell prostrate before him, embraced his feet, and exclaimed with a trembling voice, My dearest Lord, are you then alive? I am, said he, but now I cannot stay; detain me not, nor take as yet your last farewell of me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father, nor will I leave the world for some time; you shall have an opportunity of seeing me yet again. Go tell my Disciples I am risen from the dead, and live for evermore; and in a little time I will ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God, to receive full power over all things in heaven and on earth, and to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also. At these words he immediately disappeared, and left her in the most joyful admiration and surprize. In an instant he passed through the air invisible, and met the other Mary and Salome, who in terror had fled from the Sepulchre, and were nigh entering the city. As soon as he appeared he saluted them: They knew his voice and countenance. Astonished and overjoyed, they fell down before him, embraced his feet, and worshipped him: To whom he said, be not afraid, go immediately and tell my brethren, that I am risen from the dead, and that in a little time I will see them in Galilee. Having spoken these words, he vanished out of their sight.

These

These several women and the two Apostles having left the Sepulchre, Joanna with the other Galilean women, and some from Jerusalem along with them, being altogether ignorant of these things, arrived at the Sepulchre, with the spices they had prepared for embalming the body of Jesus. A sudden terror seized them all when they found the Stone removed from the Sepulchre : But entering in, they were more surprized when they observed that the body was gone, and the dead clothes left behind. While they were thus amazed and perplexed, behold two Angels appeared in shining garments. At the sight they were more confounded than ever, and while they stood in silent admiration, bowing themselves with their faces to the ground, one of the Angels said unto them, Why do ye search here at the Sepulchre of the dead, for a person that is alive? For Jesus whom ye seek, is not here, dead as ye suppose, but is risen again. Do not ye remember how he told his Disciples while he was yet alive, that he would be delivered into the hands of wicked men, be put to death, and rise again on the third day : Accordingly all these things are now fulfilled. At these words they immediately remembered that oftentimes they had heard his Disciples debating about this matter. Then returning from the Sepulchre in a transport of joy and fear, scarce knowing whether they should believe what the Angel had told them, or whether they were not deceived and the body

stolen away ; they ran to inform the Disciples and others of what they had heard and seen, but their relation met with little or no credit, for the resurrection was in itself so strange a thing, and the minds of the Disciples were at this time so agitated and oppressed with sorrow, and prejudiced with the disappointments they had met with, that though he had so plainly foretold them he would rise again, yet they scarcely entertained any hopes of it ; neither could they believe the reports of the women, but their words seemed to them as idle tales. John was the only person who gave credit to what they said. In the mean time Peter reflecting upon all the circumstances he had heard and seen, arose immediately with some others, and ran directly to the Sepulchre with a design to see if the Angels mentioned by the women were still in that place ; but when they came there, none appeared. Peter therefore coming to the entrance, stooped down and only looked in, but saw nothing save the linen clothes lying where they were before. Having thus received no further information, he departed, wondering and perplexed at every thing which had come to pass.

By this time the Chief Priests were assembled in the council-chamber ; for some of the soldiers who had guarded the Sepulchre, as soon as they had recovered from their fright, fled directly into the city, and informed them of all that had happened : But they being hardened to the last degree,

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gree, and having advanced in their wickedness too far to retreat, immediately conven'd the Sanhedrim, with a design to consult what measures might be necessary to preserve their authority, and to secure the people from giving any credit to the evidences of Christ's Resurrection. For this end Alexander rose up, and delivered his mind in the following words.

We are now reduced to the last extremity ; all possible methods have been used to suppress the grand Impostor, but all we have hitherto done seems to be in vain : The soldiers in terror have fled from the Sepulchre, the Stone is rolled away by an invisible hand, and the body is gone. It is impossible to deny these facts, this amazing story will speedily fly through the city, and perhaps throw all into confusion ; his Disciples will from thence take occasion to say that he is risen from the dead ; the multitude amazed at the report, and reflecting upon what happened at his death, may possibly believe it ; and if they should, will they not look upon us as murderers, cast off all respect to our authority, and revenge his death upon us. Better had it been if no guard had been placed at the Sepulchre, even though his Disciples should have stolen him away ; for in that case it would have been much easier to prove the deceit than it will be now ; for the report of the Soldiers, if it comes to the ears of the people, will give it an air of probability. A few of the guard only have told the matter to us, the rest,

no doubt, will relate every circumstance to all they see, as an apology for their flight. This extraordinary fact cannot be denied; the question then is this, how shall we account for these things in such a manner as to give no encouragement to the imposture, nor any occasion for a tumult among the people. For my part, I shall readily agree to any method that may deliver us out of the present difficulty.

No sooner had he spoken these words, than Caiaphas replied, It is well known with what design the guard was appointed, namely to prevent the Disciples from stealing away the body; this will easily suggest to us a method of accounting for all that has happened; let us therefore persuade the people that the soldiers fell asleep, during which time the Disciples came and stole him away. For this end we must bribe the guard to propagate this report, for their testimony is absolutely necessary to give it any degree of credit among the multitude. A liberal reward for their trouble, together with a promise of security from punishment, will easily prevail. But here I foresee another difficulty, what if Jesus should appear among us again? This I think may easily be accounted for, by affirming that he was taken down from the cross before he was really dead: And if he should never appear in public, who will give credit to what his Disciples may say. They may perhaps endeavour to render this account we give contradictory and inconsistent; but

but their influence, I hope, will have no weight against our authority over the people. Let us therefore call in the guard, and direct them to behave in the manner now proposed. Accordingly the Soldiers were brought in, a large sum of money was distributed amongst them, and the following charge given them by the High Priest.

You see how liberally we have rewarded you for your trouble last night, and we expect you will be so grateful as to say nothing that will in any measure be detrimental to the public interest; for if this extraordinary affair be told with all its circumstances, it may occasion a rebellion in Judea. It is highly expedient therefore, to prevent this, that you inform every one who talks of it, that exhausted with long watching, you fell asleep, during which time his Disciples came and stole him away; and if this report should come to the Governor's ears, we now engage to persuade him, and secure you from any punishment. Accordingly the Soldiers received the money, obeyed their instructions, and reported to every one what they knew to be equally false, contradictory, and dishonourable to themselves. But others having told the fact, as it really happened, to every one they met, as an excuse for their precipitate flight from the Sepulchre, and having received none of the money which was given to their companions, they continued still to affirm the same thing. Hence it came to pass, that in a short time these different reports flew over all

the City, whereby the curiosity of many was raised to such a degree, that multitudes flocked to the Sepulchre, comparing the relations of the different Soldiers with the circumstances of the time and place. This gave occasion to various conjectures and disputations, every one reasoning as interest, prejudice, fancy, or the love of truth inclined him. Amazed at the different reports, among others came Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in all haste to the Sepulchre: While they arrived John a zealous Sadducee entertained the people with the following speech.

The Stone we see is removed, the body is gone, these are plain facts; some are at a loss how to account for them, but I see no difficulty, when I consider the testimony of the Soldiers; surely they knew best what happened while they were present: They tell us, that oppressed with weariness, they at last fell asleep, during this time his Disciples came, removed the Stone, and carried away the body; this account is simple and natural, and as for the Soldiers contradicting one another, there is nothing strange in that; part of them tell that they were affrighted with some terrible apparition, and how much have men been terrified in their dreams? the impressions then are sometimes as strong and lively as when awake: This very circumstance proves plainly that they were all asleep, and as for the design of their carrying away the body, this may be accounted for also; it is well known that he

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was taken down from the cross long before malefactors usually expire; and though the legs of the two thieves were broken to put an end to their torments, yet no violence was done to him; his apparent death seems then to have been only a fainting fit, from which he might recover; in hopes of this they have stolen away his body. We have heard of persons recovering even after they have been buried, this will easily account for the conduct of his Disciples; and should he ever appear again, there will be nothing extraordinary or miraculous in the case. Nothing indeed can render a pretended resurrection more plausible to the ignorant who are prejudiced in his favour, than this plot so well concerted, and so happily executed. Be assured therefore the whole is a cheat from first to last, and should be regarded as such.

To all this Joseph listened with indignation and contempt, and therefore to undeceive the people, who seemed to give credit to all he said, he replied in the following words:

I should rejoice indeed, said he, to see imposture fairly detected and exposed to universal contempt; but I can never assent to that which is improbable, contradictory and absurd, these are the marks of imposture, and too much of this kind appears in the account so confidently delivered. I therefore beg your attention while I endeavour to lay them open to your view. We have been told that Jesus was taken down from

the cross before he was really dead, having only fainted away with exquisite pain. Ask the Centurion and the Soldiers who watched him upon the cross ; these surely must have known whether he was dead or not ; and though his legs were not broken, yet his heart was pierced with a spear, the great effusion of blood and water shews plainly how impossible it was he could ever revive. Was not the Sepulchre examined last night by the Priests, who had all the evidences of his death that could be desired ? Had his Disciples expected a recovery from a fainting fit, would they have buried him ? Would they not rather have used all possible means, as soon as he was taken down from the cross, to restore him to life ? Had they entertained any hopes of this kind, would they have wrapped him in dead clothes, embalmed his body, and then left him alone in the dark cold Sepulchre ? These questions demand a serious answer . And now I appeal to every man if these circumstances do not abundantly prove that his Disciples could never steal him away in hopes of a recovery. And if they could have no hopes of restoring their Master to life again, what could they propose by stealing his dead body ? We are told it might be with a design to impose upon the world, and make us believe that he rose again from the dead ; but this is a supposition evidently weak and groundless to the last degree. Is it probable they could have formed a resolution so bold and desperate as

to force the guard, well armed and accustomed to war? It is well known how they behaved when their Master was apprehended; they were seized with such a panic, that they all forsook him and fled: If they had not sufficient courage to defend him when alive, how can we suppose they would ever fight for him when dead? Possibly it will be said, that his Disciples knew nothing of the guard till they arrived at the Sepulchre, where by accident they found them all asleep: Now granting this to be true, though it is very improbable, can we really suppose they would venture to roll away the stone, and carry off the body? Such an attempt would have been rash to the last degree, and inconsistent with their known characters. But there are yet greater difficulties remaining: Who can believe that a band of Roman soldiers, under the strictest discipline, would all fall into a profound sleep at one and the same moment of time, and thereby expose themselves to the severest punishments of the military law? But even supposing that to have been the case, would not the Disciples have been under great apprehensions lest the guard should awake while they were rolling away the stone, and carrying off the body? You may imagine what the danger would have been. Would they in such hurry and precipitation have taken sufficient time to strip their Master of the winding-sheet, and the napkin that was about his head, and lay them by carefully here in the Sepulchre? Whoever then rolled

rolled up the dead clothes, and laid them by, must have been under no apprehensions of danger. But further, if the guard were all asleep during that time, how could they know that the body was stolen? or how could they know that his Disciples stole it. During the time of sleep our senses are so entirely locked and shut up, that we are wholly ignorant of every thing that happens around us. If they saw and heard all these things so distinctly as they say, they must certainly have been awake; and if they were asleep, as they confess they were, then it is impossible they can give any account by whom or in what manner the body was removed. Moreover, the Soldiers differ in their relation of this matter; some of them positively affirm and swear that none of them fell asleep; but that when the morning began to appear they felt an earthquake; that immediately the Stone rolled spontaneously from the door, and that some terrible Divinity sat upon it, from whose countenance the lightning flashed dreadful in their faces, insomuch that they were all affrighted to death for some time, that when they recovered, they saw no man, but fled immediately into the city: In this account they all agreed at first, though for what reasons they now differ we cannot tell. But let these opposite relations be impartially considered, and then every one may see on which side the strongest evidence lies. On the one side, every circumstance is improbable and self contradictory; on the other,

other, every thing is probable, and consistent though miraculous ; and what renders it still the more credible, is this, that the life of Jesus was attended with the most extraordinary miracles : We are all sensible of the prodigies which happened at his death, we may therefore the more easily believe that the Stone has been rolled away, and the body removed by some extraordinary cause. With what reason then can any man suppose that his Disciples have either invented or executed such an incomprehensible plot to deceive the world into a belief of his resurrection. You may all judge as you think proper, and if any man thinks he can give a better account of this extraordinary event than I have done, I am ready to hear him with patience. At these words he held his peace, waiting for an answer ; but neither John, nor any other attempting to reply, Joseph and his companion departed from the Sepulchre, and returned into the City, perplexed and amazed at what had come to pass, for as yet the reports of the women had not reached their ears.

Some time after this, when all had left the Sepulchre, Peter revolving in his mind the strange accounts he had heard, went out alone to Mount Calvary, and while he wandered melancholy and pensive, agitated with a variety of passions, suddenly his Master appeared. At the sight he fell to the ground ; but Jesus taking him by the hand, said unto him, Peter, arise, I know the sincerity
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of your repentance, I freely forgive you, and I have now appeared to confirm your pardon, and strengthen your faith. You can no longer doubt the truth of what I so often told you, that after three days I would rise again. You may now remember what passed on the holy Mount, when Moses and Elias conversed with me, concerning the sufferings which I should accomplish at Jerusalem, and the glory which should follow after: Now all these things are come to pass, and you are fully convinced by the testimony of your senses. How could you doubt the truth of my words, or the reality of my resurrection, after the proofs I had given you of my power? Did you not see me walking amidst the billows of the stormy lake? Did not you hear me rebuke the winds and the seas? Did you not see how I raised to life the widow's son of Naim, the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus of Bethany? Did I not tell you in the garden, that I had power to lay down my life, and power to take it up again? Was you not informed by the women, that I was risen from the dead? yet after all you remained doubtful and perplexed: I have now appeared to you first of all my Apostles, to remove your doubts, and to revive your desponding hopes, and at the same time to convince you, that none is more acceptable to me than a repenting sinner: Go therefore, and tell my brethren that I will see them in Galilee, and give them all necessary instructions concerning the kingdom of God, and

and their future conduct. At these words he disappeared, and left Peter entirely swallowed up in extacy of joy and admiration. After this he returned into the City, and related these things to the rest of his brethren.

No sooner had Jesus departed from mount Calvary than he entered the highway which leads from the city to Emmaus, while two of his Disciples travelled before him at a little distance, engaged in conversation about the various reports of the day. I know not, said Cleophas, what to think of these things, what can they intend by reporting that we have stolen away the body; such a thing would never have entered into our minds, I heard nothing of the watch till this morning; they affirm also that they were asleep; this story contradicts itself, and clears us, the other account is more consistent, and seems to agree better with the report of the women, an angel could easily roll away the stone, and frighten the soldiers. Every thing surprizes and perplexes me, his conception and birth were miraculous. An angel foretold them, his life was full of miracles, so was his death, and now his body is removed by a miracle. He was certainly the Messiah, said the other Disciple, and yet the shameful death he suffered is such a difficulty as I cannot get over, it is inconsistent with all the descriptions concerning the Messiahs kingdom; had he lived, there is no doubt but he would have redeemed Israel from
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the Roman yoke ; but alas ! his mournful and unexpected death has quite blasted all our expectations. By this time Jesus came up, and joined their company like a stranger. What conversation is this, said he, you are engaged in ? you seem to be very much dejected, as if you had heard some bad tidings or suffered some considerable loss, pray what is the matter ? is it possible, replied Cleophas, that you can be ignorant of these wonderful things which have happened in Jerusalem within these few days, and are now the subject of conversation to the whole city ? what things do you mean, said Jesus ? I mean, replied Cleophas, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who appeared as a great Prophet sent from God, and one highly esteemed by the people on account of his excellent doctrine and astonishing miracles ; but the chief priests and our rulers, envying his reputation, have combined against him and contrary to all justice and humanity have put him to a most infamous death. We thought indeed he had been the person who would have redeemed Israel, and even after his death we were very unwilling to give up all our expectations ; but now this is the third day after his death, we are in the utmost perplexity, and know not what to think of these things. Something very extraordinary indeed has been told us this morning, which fills us with great surprize, and we are very solicitous about the event. For certain women who had entertained

entertained the same hopes with ourselves, going early to visit the sepulchre found that his body was removed and what is yet more surprizing they told us that a vision of angels appeared to them, assuring them that he was risen from the dead. This story appeared to us altogether vain and incredible, however two of our company went directly to the sepulchre, and as the women had told, they found the stone rolled away from the door, the body gone, and the dead clothes lying within, but they saw no angels nor received any further account what was become of him. These things together with the report of the Roman guard who watched the sepulchre have greatly surprized us, and we know not what to think of them.

These things are indeed strange, replied Jesus, and to you they seem altogether unaccountable: but had you understood the antient prophets, you would not have been perplexed with difficulties, for in all their writings from the beginning to the end, you will find it clearly foretold of the Messiah, that through indignity, reproach, and contempt, from the malice and perverseness of men, and at last by undergoing an ignominious and cruel death, he should be exalted to a glorious and eternal kingdom. You thought that he would have redeemed Israel, but what kind of redemption did you expect? deliverance only from the Roman yoke? in this you are very far mistaken, know you not that the tyranny of
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Satan is worse than that of Cæsar; that everlasting death in another world is infinitely more terrible than any servitude can possibly be in this? now the great end of the Messiahs coming is to deliver men from the power of Satan, from the dominion of sin, and death everlasting in the world to come. Attend therefore to what Moses and the Prophets have said concerning the Messiah.

When our first parents had sinned against God by the temptation of the devil in the form of a serpent, then the Lord said unto him, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed, and her seed, it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. These words were spoken with a design to comfort the guilty parents of the human race, and to give them hope that whatever they had lost by the cunning and malice of Satan, they should recover by the seed of the woman, that is, they should be restored to life again, and to the possession of everlasting happiness in a world to come. Now the seed of the woman is the Messiah, the same person foretold by the prophet Isaiah, behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Have you never heard that Jesus of Nazareth was born of a virgin? has he not laboured with unwearied care and diligence to destroy the works of the devil, and redeem men from his power? by the malice of Satan he has suffered persecution
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and death, by the secret influence of the old serpent Judas betrayed him, and the Jews have crucified him, they have bruised his heel, while in the mean time his soul remained invincible amidst torments and death, and therefore he will certainly break the power of Satan, and destroy the empire of death.

Is it not said by David in the person of the Messiah, sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required, then said I, lo I come, in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea thy law is within my heart, I have preached righteousness in the great congregation, lo I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation, I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation. Were not these words fully accomplished in the person of your Master? did he not preach righteousness to the whole nation? you are sensible he was a Prophet mighty in word and in deed before God and all the people, agreeable to the words of Moses the Lord thy God shall raise up a Prophet unto thee, from among thy brethren like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. Did he not suffer death with the most perfect submission to the will of God, and with the kindest affection to the sons of men? could
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any sacrifice be so acceptable in the sight of God as the patient and meritorious death of such a person? be not surprized then, if Jesus of Nazareth whom ye took for the Messiah was so unjustly put to death; this is only what the prophet Daniel so clearly foretold, after threescore and two weeks, says he, shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself, for seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon the holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. These weeks are now accomplished, the Messiah has been cut off. The prophet Isaiah has spoken to the same purpose concerning him when he saith, he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed; all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all; he was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb so he opened not his mouth, he was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgressions of my people was he stricken; it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief and made his soul an offering for sin.

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It is evident then you see, that the Messiah ought to have suffered all these things, you know that Jesus of Nazareth was treated in this manner, why then should you be in perplexity? Remember also what David saith concerning him. Why doth the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing, the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed, and yet you are surprized because Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Roman soldiers, and the Jewish nation were united in persecuting your Master, when in the mean time it is evident that the hand and counsel of the Lord determined that all this should be done. Do you think it strange that Jesus in whom you trusted should be despised and rejected of the nation, when the prophet Isaiah has so clearly foretold that it would come to pass in these words, he is despised and rejected of men a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, we hid as it were our faces from him, he was despised and we esteemed him not. You were surprized at the treachery of Judas when he sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver; but the prophet Zechariah foretold it would be so, in these words; so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver, a goodly price that I was prized at of them. If Jesus then was shamefully intreated by his enemies it was exactly agreeable to the words of Isaiah in the person of the Messiah.

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I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, I hid not my face from shame and spitting. Has not David described him surrounded with cruel persecutors, and complained in these words? Thou hast brought me to the dust of death, for dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me, they pierced my hands and my feet, I may tell all my bones, they look and stare upon me, they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. Did your Master suffer these things, and are not the circumstances of his death clearly pointed out in these words? how then can you doubt whether he be the Messiah? you know with what cruel insolence and contemptuous derision your Master was treated in the agonies of death, how justly might he have complained in the words of the Psalmist, which can agree to none but the Messiah; I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people, all they that see me laugh me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, he trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. You must certainly know that your Master was insulted in this manner while he hung upon the cross. All this instead of raising your doubts should rather confirm your faith in him as the true Messiah. Did they not give him vinegar mingled with gall while he thirsted upon the cross? and was not that

that foretold by David in these words, reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness, I looked for some to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters but I found none, they gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Did your Master suffer as a malefactor, and in the company of such men? and was not the Messiah to die in this manner according as it is written by the prophet Isaiah, and he was numbered with the transgressors. In what manner was he buried? was it by the permission of the governor who alone has power to dispose of malefactors? Was he buried honourably, and by any of the rich and powerful men of the nation? if so, the like was to happen the Messiah, as it is written by the prophet, he made his grave with the rich and with the wicked in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit found in his mouth. Did one of the soldiers thrust a spear into his side? think how exactly that agrees with the prophecy of Zechariah, they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn.

Now I appeal to your understandings whether these prophecies do not evidently relate to the Messiah. Their meaning is obvious to every attentive and unprejudiced mind, and you have seen them literally accomplished in the sufferings and death of that person you so much lament. All these do abundantly confirm his title, and

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prove beyond dispute that he was the true Messiah. These things he ought to have suffered before he entered into the possession of his kingdom and glory. For this end it was foretold that he would rise again from the dead. Observe what the prophet Isaiah says, when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. How could he prolong his days after his soul became an offering for sin, or after he was brought unto the dust of death, if he did not rise again, and live for evermore? consider also the words of David, to whom being a prophet, God had sworn that the Messiah should descend from his loins, and sit upon his throne. He foreseeing this, spake of his resurrection in these words, I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved, therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. You see from this that his soul was to return from the state of the dead, before any corruption would seize his body. Now from all that I have said unto you, it plainly appears that the Messiah was to suffer, to die, and rise again from the dead; all these things were foretold by Moses and the Prophets: you have seen them exactly accomplished, and therefore let not your hearts be troubled

troubled on account of these things which have befallen your Master. Did he never tell you that he behoved to suffer many things of the chief priests and elders, and be put to death, and rise again the third day? the report therefore ye have heard of his resurrection is not without just ground; if some of your companions have examined the sepulchre, and found it as the women have told you, you have reason to believe that he is actually risen from the dead, and may entertain the hopes of seeing him again, when your hearts shall rejoice, and all your perplexities be at an end.

During the whole of this discourse the two Disciples listened with the keenest attention, surprized to find a stranger, as they supposed, so well acquainted with the life and sufferings of their Lord; they were altogether astonished at the manner in which he explained and applied the Scriptures so much to the purpose, with uncommon authority, and irresistible evidence; and therefore when they came near the village, they earnestly pressed him to abide with them all night because the evening was at hand. Accordingly he consented, and when they had got into their lodging, and were set down to supper, he took bread, gave thanks to God, brake it, and gave unto them in the same manner as he used to do before his death. At this their attention was awakened, they fixed their eyes upon his countenance, gazed with silent admiration, and found

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that it was their Lord. But no sooner was he known, than immediately he vanished out of their sight. This encreased their astonishment, they looked round, and in silent wonder they stared at one another for a little time. At length, said Cleophas, he is certainly risen from the dead, we have seen him and heard him as distinctly as ever we did before, I am surprized how we could take him for a stranger; did you not observe how readily he repeated every prophecy relating to the Messiah, how clearly did he explain, and how justly did he apply them to the circumstances of his own death? his words were delivered with so much ease, with so much dignity, and divine energy, that our hearts were touched, our affections were kindled, and our understandings enlightened to such a degree, that none but himself could have done the same. Yet after all, his disappearing like an Angel in a moment not only surprizes but also perplexes me, for I cannot conceive how a human body can vanish in this manner. My heart is now so elated with joy, that I can have no rest till we return, tho' late, and inform our brethren of this astonishing interview; such tidings will no doubt confirm the reports of the women, and fill their hearts with gladness. Accordingly after supper they returned to Jerusalem, where they found the Apostles and several other Disciples conversing about the resurrection of their Lord, and particularly about his appearing to the women, and afterwards

wards to Peter on mount Calvary. Having received a distinct account of all these things with a pleasing admiration, they afterwards related to them his appearance, his conversation on the way to Emmaus, and the manner in which he discovered himself at supper. Upon this occasion every circumstance was examined, and many questions were proposed by them who had not seen him. While they were thus conversing together, the place being private, and the doors shut for fear of the Jews, in a moment Jesus himself appeared standing in the midst of them, and saluted them with his usual words of familiarity and kindness. At sight of him they were all afraid, and cried out, supposing they had seen a spirit, or only the ghost of their deceased Lord. Beholding them now in such terror and confusion, he said, what means all this groundless fear and perplexity; see there my hands and my feet; observe the prints of the nails which fixed me to the cross, feel them and be convinced that I am truly your Master, risen from the dead, not with an apparent, but with a real body, even the very same which suffered on the cross, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as ye see me have. At these words they were filled with excessive wonder and joy, yet after all they could scarce believe the testimony of their senses, till having asked for some meat, they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and an honey comb, which he eat in their presence. Then were they fully satisfied, and

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all their doubts removed. As soon as he had done eating he said to them, you see now the accomplishment of my words; I told you frequently that I behoved to suffer and die at Jerusalem, and that after three days I would rise again; all these things have come to pass exactly as the Prophets have foretold: then opened he their understandings to know the Scriptures by a brief explanation and application of the various predictions relating to himself. Which having done to the full conviction of all present, he immediately disappeared and left them in the most joyful admiration.

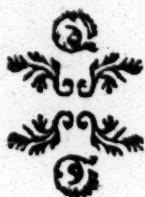
Upon this occasion, Thomas one of the Apostles was absent, who afterwards was informed by the rest, how their Lord had appeared and conversed with them. But he declared that he could by no means give any credit to their report, that their senses had only been imposed upon by some phantom or apparition, and that unless he could have an opportunity of seeing him with his own eyes, feeling him with his hands, and examining the prints of the nails, and the wound in his side, he would not believe that he was risen from the dead. Thus he remained in unbelief in opposition to the united testimony of all his brethren, till about a week after, when he and they were assembled together. Upon this occasion they endeavoured to perswade him by many arguments that their Master was truly risen from the dead, but all in vain, till on a sudden

sudden while the doors were shut, Jesus appeared in the midst of them, and after the usual salutation he addressed himself particularly to Thomas.

How is it possible, said he, that you can reject the testimony of so many witnesses? Do you think that their senses were all deceived? If so, do you suppose that this could have been done without a miracle? And can you imagine that God would work a miracle with a design to make men believe a falsehood? Surely no, what then could you mean by rejecting their testimony in favour of my resurrection? Did you imagine they could form a design to impose upon you, and to make you believe, what they themselves knew to be false? This you had no reason to suspect, nor had they any temptation to be guilty of such a crime. If you deny the testimony of credible witnesses, in support of facts whether common or extraordinary, your knowledge must be confined within very narrow limits, and you can believe nothing but what falls under the examination of your own senses. In that case you must live in perpetual doubts, and uncertainty even in the most important concerns of this present life. And in this case no revelation of the divine will can ever obtain credit among men, because a true revelation must necessarily suppose, and be founded upon extraordinary facts, which the testimony of credible witnesses can alone support. How many miracles have you seen done by me? And if you will not believe

the testimony of your brethren, how can you expect that any man will believe yours? However as I know your unbelief is not founded in malice and obstinacy, but arises from a sincere and strong desire of obtaining the fullest conviction, I am willing to satisfy your desire. Observe now my hands and my feet, see there the prints of the nails, feel them; look here in my side, put your finger into the wound, there you see where the spear entered and pierced my heart; examine every thing fully, and be no longer faithless, but believing. You have as strong evidences of the reality of my body now, as ever you had before my death. Accordingly Thomas having seen and felt the wounds in his hands, feet, and side, immediately fell upon his knees, and cried out in an extasy of wonder and joy, thou art indeed my Lord and my God, the very same who died upon the cross. Then said Jesus to him, you have now believed upon the testimony of your senses the truth of my resurrection, but every one cannot obtain the same favour you have found. Blessed are they, who upon the testimony of credible witnesses shall believe the same important truth, and live according to the gospel which I have delivered. I have now removed all your doubts and perplexities; I have yet many things to say unto you, but as it is neither convenient nor safe for you to remain any longer in this city. I desire therefore you may return into Galilee; there I will see you, and
give

give you further instructions concerning the kingdom of God. At these words he became invisible, and departed from the house. The feast of the Passover being now fully concluded, they left the city, returned to Galilee, and followed their respective occupations.



M 4

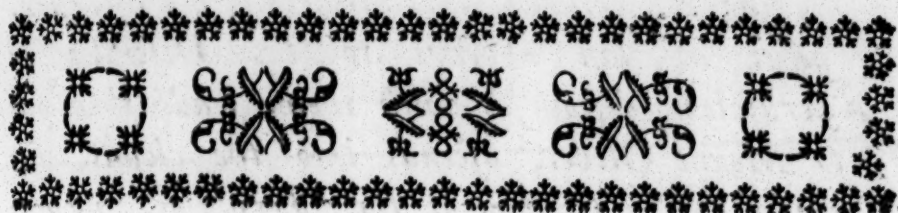
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T H E
M E S S I A H.

B O O K IX.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

Jesus appears and converses with his Disciples at the Lake of Tiberias, and afterwards upon a mountain in the presence of five hundred spectators. He explains the nature of his kingdom, and foretells the state of his Church till the end of the World. Immediately after this, Satan assembles his angels in Gadara, proposes schemes

for defeating the intentions of the Messiah, corrupting his Church, and disturbing his ascension. Jesus at last appears to his Disciples in Jerusalem, discourses with them, leads them out to Mount Olivet, ascends into the clouds, sits down on the Chariot of the Cherubims, mounts upwards with an immense retinue of Angels, confounds and disperses Satan and all his host in the upper region of the air ; then ascends through the second or starry heavens, arrives at the third heaven, and enters with all his train ; he is conducted to the Divine Presence, approved of by his Father, sits down on his right hand, is invested with universal dominion, and worshipped by all the Angels and glorified Saints.

OFTENTIMES had the Disciples, after their return into Galilee, longed for a visit of their Lord. At length while Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, and others, were employed in fishing upon the Lake of Tiberias, he appeared early in the morning standing upon the shore ; and calling aloud, he enquired if they had got any fish. But they supposing him to be a stranger, replied, that though they had laboured all night, yet they had caught nothing. He then directed them to cast their net upon the right side of the boat, and they would find abundance : Accordingly they did, and to their great surprize they enclosed such a multitude of fishes, that they could not draw them into the boats,

boats, but were obliged to drag them towards the shore. Upon this occasion, John recollecting that he had formerly been present at a like wonderful draught of fishes, observed to Peter, that the Person whom they took for a Stranger upon the shore, could be none else than their Lord. At these words Peter immediately put on his coat, leaped into the water, and went ashore, while the rest in the boat dragged the net along. As soon as they came to land, they were surprized to see a fire with fish broiling on it, and some loaves lying upon the grass. While they looked with admiration, but said nothing, Jesus desired them to bring some of the fish they had taken, and dress it along with the rest: Accordingly they did, having first drawn the net ashore, containing in it one hundred and fifty-three large fishes. All things being ready, they sit down to meat, which was distributed amongst them by their Master, who presided over the feast, and spoke to them in the following words.

You see now, my friends, what success you have obtained by following my direction; this is only an earnest of far greater success, and in matters of greater importance: Henceforth ye shall be fishers of men, and amazing shall be your success in the world. Be zealous and unwearied as I have been, and your reward shall be unspeakably great. Then fixing his eyes upon Peter, he said, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love

love me better than the rest of my Disciples do? Truly, my Lord, said he, you know how well I love you. Then, said his Master, let that appear in your conduct, especially by your affectionate zeal in promoting the salvation of my Church and people. In a little after he asked him the second time, and received the same answer, and then a third time: At this Peter seemed to be very much grieved, as if his Master suspected his sincerity, and therefore he replied again, Lord, thou knowest the secrets of all hearts; thou knowest that I love thee. I know it, indeed, said Jesus, but as I told you before, let the sincerity and fervency of your love appear from your zeal in promoting the salvation of my people: For in my absence, every kind action you do to them, I regard as if done to myself: And accordingly I know you will do so, even at the hazard of your life; for the time is coming, when you who now girded yourself willingly, and stretched out your hands affectionately to come to me through the water, shall in your old age be girded by others, and forced to stretch out your hands upon the cross, where you shall die for my names sake. Arise now, and follow me a little, for I have somewhat else to speak to you. Accordingly he went along with his Master, and looking about, he observed John coming up behind them; whereupon he said, Lord, what shall become of this man, whom you always treated with peculiar marks of the most

most tender friendship? That is a matter, replied his Master, in which you have no concern; follow you me. What if he should remain till I come, in vengeance against the Jewish nation. I once told you, that there are some among you which shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God coming with power. I have many things of importance to communicate to you, but another time will be more expedient. Accordingly having fixed the time and place of his next appearance, he immediately departed.

No sooner had his Disciples returned home, than they went through the country, informing their friends of the time and place, where every one might have full satisfaction, and all their doubts removed concerning the truth of his Resurrection. In the mean time every one applied himself to his proper business until the day appointed came, when they all assembled upon a mountain, being in number above five hundred. Scarce had they fully met, when Jesus appeared in the midst of them, and standing upon an eminence, every eye was fixed upon him, the multitude were astonished; scarce could they believe what they saw, nor did they speak a single word: Admiration and fear sealed their lips. After he had looked around for a little time, he thus began:

Now, my Friends, you see that I am really alive, the very same who died upon the cross; you have all the proofs of my Resurrection that
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can possibly be given. I was condemned and put to death as a Blasphemer, because I said I was the Son of God, the true Messiah, and the King of Israel. Now my words are abundantly confirmed. God has set his seal to the truth of my Doctrine, and the divinity of my Mission, by raising me from the dead, as David had foretold in these words, "I will declare the decree, " the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son, " this day have I begotten thee." Though you believe I am the Messiah, yet hitherto have ye been ignorant of my kingdom; it is now highly necessary that ye understand it aright. You must know, therefore, that since the days of Abraham, the peculiar kingdom of God has been confined within the limits of the Jewish nation; "He " shewed his words unto Jacob, his statutes and " judgments unto Israel, he hath not dealt so " with any other nation, and as for his judge- " ments they have not known them." The Nations were ignorant of him, they were seduced by Satan to the worship of idols, to the grossest superstition, and all manner of wickedness. The ceremonial law was enjoined as a wall of partition, to separate the Jews from all religious intercourse with the Gentiles, and as shadows of better things to come. The time is now at hand when all these ceremonies shall cease, and the dispensation of Moses be at an end. The kingdom of God shall be enlarged, and all nations brought under his authority, as it is written by
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the Prophet Daniel ; “ In the days of these
“ kings shall the God of heaven set up a king-
“ dom which shall never be destroyed, and the
“ kingdom shall not be left to other people, but
“ it shall break in pieces and consume all these
“ kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever :” And
in me shall these words be accomplished, “ I
“ have given thee for a light to the Gentiles,
“ that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends
“ of the earth.” The like promise was made to
Abraham ; “ in thy seed shall all the families of
“ the earth be blessed.” The Jews expect a
Messiah that will conquer the world, and reign
over all nations in the greatest pomp and splen-
dor ; but their understandings are darkened, they
know not the Scriptures ; I despise all dominion
gained by force, “ my people shall be willing in
“ the day of my power :” Neither the allure-
ments nor terrors of this world, shall ever be
employed in gaining Subjects to my Authority.
“ Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, saith the
“ Prophet, behold thy King cometh unto thee ;
“ he is just and having salvation, lowly and ri-
“ ding upon an ass ; and I will cut off the cha-
“ riot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jeru-
“ salem, and the battle bow shall be cut off, and
“ he shall speak peace to the heathen, and his
“ dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from
“ the river to the ends of the earth.” My king-
dom is indeed universal, for all power in heaven
and on earth is given unto me ; and therefore I
“ have

have chosen and appointed you to preach the Gospel unto all Nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have spoken unto you. He that believeth on me, and by baptism enters into an obligation to obey me, and lives accordingly, shall be saved : But he that rejects the Gospel through obstinacy, or lives in opposition to it after he has received it, shall certainly perish. See that ye add none of your own inventions to the doctrines I have taught you, and whatsoever ye leave upon record, let it be the dictates of the holy Ghost, that all succeeding ages may enjoy the same Gospel which I have delivered to you ; for while men search with diligence, and practise with integrity, what is therein contained, truth and righteousness shall prevail in my Kingdom. But as soon as they introduce their own inventions, and make their own interpretations the rule of faith and practice to all others, then shall arise strife and contention, hatred and persecution ; then shall the terrors and allurements of this world be employed as engines to establish an awful tyranny over the consciences of men. By such means as these, shall the purity and simplicity of the Gospel be lost amidst a boundless multitude of superstitious inventions : For as the Jews have rendered the commandments of God of none effect through their traditions, so shall it be in future ages among my Disciples, till at length, oppressed with intolerable bondage, they shall see their error, shake
off

off the yoke, and return again to the pure and uncorrupted fountain of truth and righteousness. By slow and imperceptible degrees shall this corruption be introduced, and removed after a long time; then all the ends of the earth shall turn unto God, and all the kindreds of the nations bow before him. Then shall the world enjoy a state of purity, peace and happiness, for the space of a thousand years when they "shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more, till the thousand years be expired." Then the spirit of error and iniquity shall revive, and begin to persecute as before, but it shall not prevail; for suddenly will I appear in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Then will I raise the dead, judge the world in righteousness, and render unto every one according to his works. Therefore, my dearest Friends and Brethren, let nothing discourage you in the important work I have committed to your charge: For God will assist you by his Spirit, and confirm your doctrine by a variety of extraordinary gifts and astonishing miracles. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life. You know I was once dead, and now I am alive, and live for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death. As my body was once like yours, frail and mortal, so shall yours become like mine incorruptible and immortal.

My

My kingdom shall be your everlasting habitation, and unspeakable joy the reward of all your labours. At these words he became invisible; all were astonished at the divine eloquence which flowed from his lips, and amazed at his sudden and unaccountable departure. Immediately they descended from the mountain, fully convinced that he was risen from the dead, only some few were doubtful of the reality of his body, because he disappeared in a moment.

In the mean time, while Jesus instructed his Disciples upon the mountain, Satan, disguised in the form of a serpent, lay concealed in the cavity of a rock, listening with attention to all that was said: From thence, like a vulture keen for blood, he mounts the liquid sky, and quickly rests in Gadara, upon the same precipice from whence the headlong swine sometime before had perished in the waters. There all his Angels were soon assembled: With fear, and malice, and anxious suspense they wait impatient, while their mighty Chief endeavoured thus to comfort their desponding hearts.

Hear, all ye friends, while I relate what yet may banish fear, raise our hopes, and animate our zeal. Lately we thought the day of vengeance just at hand, when hostile power compelled us to retire before the Son of God, and dread his awful word. But now the danger is far removed, I see through his deep designs; he intends to draw off our subjects in every nation

from our obedience, and to reduce them under the authority of our Almighty foe. For this end he has chosen a few ignorant fishermen of Galilee, whom he proposes to send into every corner of the world, with the gentle force of persuasion, and the power of miracles, in hopes of a general conquest. From the account I have heard him give of his kingdom, and the instructions he delivered to his Disciples, I can easily judge of the measures necessary to defeat his designs. As for the Jews, our only business is, to confirm them in their former prejudices ; for while they expect a temporal Prince like the mighty men of this world, they will never believe in him, and therefore they will treat his Disciples as they have treated himself. We have the greatest probability of success, while pleasures, riches and honours can have any influence upon the hearts of men. All the allurements of this world are on our side ; few will be inclined to enquire into the truth of doctrines, the belief and profession of which must be attended with poverty, shame, persecution, and death. The Jews have rejected the Messiah notwithstanding the miracles done by him in the most public manner ; how then will they believe a miracle they never saw ? For as far as I can understand, he never yet appeared to any but his own Disciples ; and we may reasonably expect that the testimony of such mean and contemptible persons will be little regarded in opposition to public authority, and the deep-rooted prejudices of

of the people. And as for the kingdoms of this world, over whom we have reigned for so many ages, we have no reason to fear that ever they will be seduced by a few despicable fishermen. Our Divinities have been established, and held sacred there for many ages. The multitude are strongly attached to our interest : Our solemn rites are wisely calculated to flatter their inclinations, and gratify their passions. The influence of the Priests, the ingenuity of the Poets, the subtile reasonings of the Philosophers, together with the authority of the Civil Magistrates, are all united in support of our cause. By the force of Arguments, and the power of Miracles, these fishermen are to appeal to the reason of mankind. But reason we know has but a small share in the conduct of human life ; their appetites and passions, strengthened by habit, confirmed by education, by examples, by established laws, customs and manners, these are the springs of human conduct, the principles of all their actions. All these are engaged in support of our authority, and in direct opposition to that of our adversaries. But let us suppose the worst, we must provide against it. Suppose the world should abandon our interest, and submit to the Messiah, yet there is a possibility of corrupting his religion, and rendering it useless. This I understand he is very apprehensive of ; his subjects then will still be within the reach of our influence. His doctrines I find will be left upon record as the only

only rule of faith and manners to all succeeding ages ; we must therefore use all the methods in our power to inspire his followers with pride, ambition, covetousness, mutual hatred, and discord. Men of this temper will look upon their own judgment in religious matters as superior to all others ; their opinions will then be esteemed sacred by all their dependents. To support the credit of these opinions, rewards must be conferred upon such as believe them, and punishments inflicted upon all who oppose them. In this manner the inventions of men may be mingled with the doctrines of Christ, and in length of time, the whole system of his religion may be changed to such a degree, as to defeat the original design of it. By the traditions of the Elders we have rendered the writings of Moses and the Prophets of none effect : By the like traditions we may render ineffectual the writings of the Apostles. There is only one thing more we must by all means endeavour to introduce into the kingdom of Christ, that is, a general corruption of manners, for in this the strength and glory of our Empire wholly consists ; and we need not be much concerned, though men should be called by his name, while in the mean time their hearts and lives are subject to our authority. In this manner shall the design of his death and resurrection be entirely frustrated, even by his own Disciples. If therefore we can prevail with them to break but one of his laws, and obstinately

nately to persevere in so doing, we are sure of all such persons, even though they should from motives of worldly interest obey all the rest. And thus if we can by any means persuade them to live in the practice of deliberate wickedness, and yet entertain the hopes of future happiness, our interest will be secure, and the religion of Christ can do us little harm. In this manner our kingdom may be established even in those places where his authority is publicly acknowledged.

I understand from his own words, that in a little time he will leave this world, ascend to our antient habitation, and take possession of an everlasting kingdom in the heavens. I rejoice to think of his departure, the farther from him the better, and yet I cannot think of his ascension without the most envious resentment. He must needs pass through part of our dominions, shall we suffer him without the least molestation? or can we make no opposition? surely our native strength, our antient courage is not yet exhausted. Let us then summon all our hosts in the upper region of the air; let us unite in close array, and hold the distant war with flaming thunder bolts cast down upon our foes thick as the rattling hail. If they advance, let shields, and swords, and long extended spears of keen ætherial temper stand in firm opposition to their front; and while we engage our foes, let the rapid wings of ten thousand angry cherubims

awake

awake the whirlwinds furious blast, and toss them in the troubled sky, or headlong drive them down to earth with sad disgrace and terrible confusion. What though we should not gain a victory, we may nevertheless obtain some small revenge, and obstruct their passage to the upper world. If ye agree to what is said, let us all prepare for fiercest battle, and diligently watch the time of his departure.

At these words the loud voice of hellish approbation sounded through all the host like distant thunders muttering in the sky. No sooner had they ceased, than like a swarm of envenom'd wasps they scatter over all the land, and with keen attention lay hold on every hint which might favour their impious designs, till within seven days of Pentecost, when the eleven, according to the appointment of their Lord, were assembled in Jerusalem. There he appeared to them in an upper chamber, saluted them with the tenderest affection, and thus began.

Now, my dearest friends and brethren, this is the last time you will ever see me upon this earth; I am now going to ascend to my Father, and to the possession of my kingdom. For the space of three years and an half, I have carefully instructed you, the very same instructions must you deliver to the world; ye know in what manner I have lived among men, I have set you an example that ye should do as I have done. As the Father sent me into the world, so send I you;

you ; my divine commission was confirmed by miracles, so shall yours ; my Resurrection from the dead is the last and the strongest proof of my divine authority, it is the basis, the immoveable foundation upon which my kingdom shall stand, it is also the proof and pledge of your resurrection to everlasting life, for as sure as I am risen again from the dead, so shall ye. During these forty days I have frequently appeared to you, and fully instructed you in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God. On the first day of the week I rose from the dead, and on that day ever since I have visited you. From henceforth let the same day be always regarded with a sacred veneration by all my Disciples. I have now appointed you to be the only witnesses of my Resurrection, and the publishers of my Religion among all nations, and this ye must do at the hazard of your lives, for ye shall be hated of all nations for my names sake. Be not dismayed at these things, nor grieved at my absence, for the Holy Ghost whom I will send from heaven shall always be with you to guide and support you. But now let us depart from the city, for as ye have been the witnesses of my Resurrection, so shall ye also of my ascension into the heavens.

Accordingly they arose, followed him through the city, unknown and unregarded by the guilty and thoughtless inhabitants, till they entered the highway which leads towards Bethany. But scarce had they passed the brook Cedron when

Peter

Peter thus addressed his Master. Lord, you see the mean and servile state of Israel the chosen people of God; they are servants in the land of promise, and in bondage to the uncircumcised Romans; we are sensible of your power over all things in heaven and on earth, will you not therefore at this time restore our antient liberties, deliver us from oppression, and grant us prosperity as in the days of old? To this he replied, I have often told you that my kingdom is not of this world; that it consists entirely in a chearful and universal obedience to the laws of God; that external pomp and magnificence have no relation to it. Instead of restoring the Jews to their antient liberties, I tell you that the kingdom of God shall be taken from them, and the Gentiles who shall believe in me, shall be chosen in their stead. But first of all it is necessary that the Gospel be offered to the Jews, "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," For though I was persecuted and put to death in that city, yet to them the first offers of mercy shall be published, and after they have rejected these, they shall at length be rejected themselves, till after the revolution of many years, when their prejudices shall be removed, and their understandings enlightened; then all Israel shall be saved, and their nation restored as at the beginning. But it is not proper that ye should know the times and seasons which infinite wisdom has appointed for

the accomplishment of these great events. As soon as I am gone into the heavens, return ye straight into the city, and abide there till the day of Pentecost, for at that time there will be assembled devout men out of all nations under heaven; then shall the power of the Holy Ghost descend upon you in a visible and extraordinary manner, and ye shall publish the truth of my Resurrection, and the doctrines of salvation, to men of all nations, and in their own languages, to the astonishment of all who shall hear you, and see the wonderful works done in my name.

By this time they had gained the top of mount Olivet nigh to Bethany. Here he stopt, and while they stood before him in a mixture of love, and sorrow, joy, and admiration, he lifted up his hands and blessed them, saying, now my dearest and best beloved friends, I have given you a commission to preach the Gospel among all nations, I have taught you by my doctrine, and led you by my example; "Be ye faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life. For unto him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am now going to sit down with my Father on his throne." Fare ye well, my blessing be with you, the blessing of my God and Father be upon you, when I am gone I will remember you, in heaven I will be your friend, and when your work is finished, I will crown you with everlasting honour and glory.

As

As soon as he had spoken these words, he arose gently from the hill, and ascended through the yielding air, while his Disciples with uplifted hands, with adoring hearts, and wondering eyes, gazed upon him till the clouds intercepted their view. In the mean time two of the angelic host which attended his person appeared to them in shining garments, and while the Disciples were still looking upwards, they said, ye men of Galilee, ye Disciples of the exalted Messiah, why stand ye gazing to the heavens, henceforth shall ye see him no longer with mortal eyes. But the day shall come, when in the glory of his Father, and with all the holy Angels he shall descend into this lower world, and render unto every one according to his deeds.

At these words the Angels disappeared, and the Disciples returned into Jerusalem. Above the clouds which at this time spread an obscure canopy over Judea, there stood a chariot of divine workmanship, the materials of which it consisted are no where to be found but in the empyrean heavens; the bottom more refined than the purest æther, was solid, impenetrable, and transparent as the chrystal. Upon this stood a throne of wonderful magnificence, whose colour resembled the meridian sky. A glorious canopy covered it above, whose sublime and vaulted cornish displayed all the beauties of the rainbow; four wheels of an amazing circumference supported the whole; these were endowed

with instinctive life, and innumerable eyes, before each wheel stood a mighty cherub with four faces, and an equal number of wings, at once they viewed the vast circumference of heaven, and wherever they inclined to move, the wheels spontaneous moved along. Upon this chariot sat down the Messiah, while brighter than the meridian sun his countenance appeared to all the heavenly host. Around him stood twenty thousand chariots of inferior size, with innumerable horses of elementary fire. In every chariot sat an archangel encompassed with thousands of inferior spirits; upwards the grand procession moved in perfect order, in heavenly splendor, without envy and without pride. But far distant, and as high as the fallen angels could ascend, they defied the hellish crew formed into hostile squadrons, and Satan on the front ready to intercept their march. Scarce had they seen, when distant thunders roar'd above their head, and flaming thunderbolts descended, thick as the rattling hail upon the earth. But shields and helmets of celestial temper resisted all their force, for blessed angels are always armed against their foes, nor ever can be conquered by apostate spirits. Ten thousand clarions now are sounded through the sky, and the vocal symphony of all the heavenly train join at once, and raise the martial song.

Let

Let God arise in dreadful pomp of war,
And let confusion scatter all his foes ;
Let yon rebellious proud infernal host
Feel instant wrath, by his avenging hand :
As dark'ned clouds of rolling smoke disperse,
When furious tempests roar along the sky,
Or like the wax dissolv'd in glowing fire,
So let thine en'm'ies perish at thy frown.

Now far in the front the great Messiah's chariot drove with rapid wheels. Incessant lightnings flash'd around his head, and streams of fire pour'd from his wrathful eyes, his countenance glowing with awful indignation, shone like refulgent brass, or like the purest gold when melted in the furnace. The incensed Cherubims were kindled into flame, their rapid wheels set heaven on fire, the bellowing thunders roared through all the host, and furious whirlwinds rose tempestuous from every angel's wings.

Satan now pale with fear beheld their approach, and trembling horror sat on every face. Conscious of inferior strength, he knew it was in vain to fight, nor could he fly ; to ascend the heavens was impossible, and to descend through the embattled squadrons of his invincible foes he dreaded worse than hell. He found no way of escape, nor any time to deliberate, for in a moment the thundering chariot of the Messiah drove with irresistible fury over his guilty head, bruis'd

and convuls'd with agonizing pain, he lay prostrate in the basest contempt, trodden under the chariot wheels of ten thousand mighty angels. A dreadful consternation seized all his guilty crew, while the hoarse tremendous thunders roar'd along the heavens, and the sharp pointed lightnings pierced the flying foe, and furious whirlwinds toss'd them round and round, and like chaff before the tempest, scattered all their broken legions through the sky. Now had they utterly perished in this their last and bold attempt, had not the great Messiah for wise purposes reserved these wicked angels to the general doom, when they and all rebellious men shall perish in the burning lake.

Now ceas'd the thunders awful voice, while the victors praise is sung in strains of celestial melody.

O great Messiah, glorious in thy power,
As in thy grace ; thou hast ascended high,
And in triumphant majesty divine,
Dispers'd thy foes, who led the captive race
Of mortal men in strong delusive chains ;
Thou mad'st them free, whom Satan had made
slaves,
Thou mak'st them rich, whom Satan had made
poor,
And God shall reign where Demons reign'd
before.

Now

Now crown'd with victory over hell and death, and all the infernal powers, the Son of God ascends triumphant through the second heavens of purest æther mix'd with the gentle beams of solar light, for every star to them appeared a sun, and every sun diffused its rays on various worlds revolving swiftly round their central fires; and every world inhabited by different tribes of sensitive or intellectual life, and every tribe rejoicing in that bliss which uncreated everlasting love bestows on all. At length within their view but far distant, distant as the polar stars of this terraquious globe, the third and glorious heaven appeared where the Almighty Father holds his throne. Swift as the rays of light, the great Messiah and all his train advance near the splendid gates, too bright for mortal eyes to view. The walls of a transparent and impenetrable substance, were of immense and amazing height, towering beyond conception, and impossible for any created being to surmount; in these were twelve gates pointing to the four quarters of the universe, of most exquisite splendor and beauty, and upon each of them an inscription was written in blazing characters, containing these words, "The just shall enter in," one more especially, which looks to this terraquious globe, was of inexpressible magnificence. To which upon the near approach of the Messiah to this gate, the heavenly song began on golden harps, join'd to the vocal strain of all his saints.

Ye

Ye gates, stand open, ye eternal doors
 Of boundless bliss and everlasting joy,
 Stand open now, disclose your splendid valves,
 The king of glory enters with his train.
 But who is he you call the glorious king?
 That mighty Lord, the Prince of angels bright,
 The great Messiah, glorious now from death,
 And crown'd with triumph over all his foes.
 Ye gates, stand open, ye eternal doors
 Of boundless bliss and never ending joy,
 Stand open now, unfold your shining leaves,
 The king of glory enters with his train.
 But who is he, that glorious king renown'd?
 That mighty Prince, o'er cherubim so high?
 The Lord of hosts, whose precious blood re-
 deem'd
 The guilty world from Satan, sin, and death.

At these words, the mighty gates opened spon-
 taneous, while the Chariot of the Messiah rushed
 in like the rapid lightning, and all his Saints,
 an immense retinue, followed harmonious in the
 most perfect order, forming a procession grand
 and magnificent beyond whatever mortal eye or
 ear hath seen or heard, or human thought con-
 ceived. Myriads of Angels bowing lowly, cast
 their crowns before him, while with purest joy
 they saluted their exalted Lord returned in glo-
 rious Majesty and triumph over all his foes. No
 radiant sun, no pale and changeful moon, nor
 twinkling

twinkling stars, give light in that celestial world ; for there the eternal Father, the uncreated source of light, dwells in essential glory, surrounded with brightness inaccessible. No mortal eye can see, nor angels themselves behold the bright and dazzling splendors of his throne. They cover their faces with their wings, when they approach near the divine presence. There thousands minister unto him, ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him. By these, in solemn Majesty, was the Messiah conducted into the splendor of his Father's glory, before which the angels were obliged to veil themselves and retire. Immediately the voice of God was heard from his awful throne, saying, " Thou art my Son, in whom
" I am well-pleased ; for since the moment thou
" first laid aside thy glory, I have seen all thine
" actions, and I approve them all ; therefore sit
" thou at my right hand till I make thine ene-
" mies thy footstool. Ask of me, and I will
" give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,
" and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy
" possession : For because thou hast humbled
" thyself and become obedient unto death, even
" the death of the cross, therefore have I ex-
" alted thee and given thee a name that is above
" every name, that all things in heaven, and
" on earth, and under the earth, may submit to
" thy authority, and confess that thou art Lord
" over all, the brightness of my glory, and the
" express image of my person."

At

At these words, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him. Immediately there was delivered into his hands, by the Almighty Father, an immense Volume, written in mysterious characters, which neither angels nor men could read, and sealed with seven seals, which none in heaven nor on earth can open. This book contained the eternal decrees of unerring wisdom, the characters of men and angels, their past, present, and future actions, the revolutions of states, kingdoms, empires, and worlds unknown; the laws of the divine government, with the various connections, relations, subordinations, and final causes of all created beings. No sooner had the Messiah received this book, with the universal power and dominion annexed to it, than Enoch, Moses, Elijah, and many others, who had borne their testimony against prevailing corruption, and prophesied of the Messiah, fell down before him and worshipped him, saying, "Thou art worthy to
" take the book, and to open the seven seals
" thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed
" us unto God by thy blood, out of every kin-
" dred, and people, and tongue and nation, and
" hast made us to our God, Kings and Priests,
" and we shall reign for ever and ever." No sooner had they ended, than the Angels, Cherubims and Seraphims, whose number was ten thousand

and times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, tuned their golden harps, and sung in raptures of divine harmony ; “ worthy art thou who
“ wast slain, to receive power and riches, and
“ wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory,
“ and blessing ; for thou art fairer than the sons
“ of men : grace is poured into thy lips, therefore God hath blessed thee for evermore. And
“ now thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,
“ the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre,
“ for thou hast loved righteousness, and hated
“ iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath
“ anointed thee with the oil of gladness above
“ thy fellows ; he hath exalted thee far above all
“ principality and power, and might and dominion, and given thee a Name which is above
“ every Name. At thy Name shall every knee
“ bow, and every tongue in heaven and earth
“ confess that thou art Lord and King, to the
“ glory of God the Father.” After this, the whole inhabitants of heaven joined in one exalted and universal chorus, saying, “ blessing, and
“ honour, and glory, and power, be unto him
“ that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the
“ Messiah for ever and ever. Amen.

THE END.

THE FIRST PART OF THE HISTORY OF THE
LIFE OF THE LATE
JAMES OGLETHORPE
BY
JOHN STURGEON
OF THE
CITY OF LONDON
IN TWO VOLUMES
THE FIRST

THE FIRST

THE FIRST

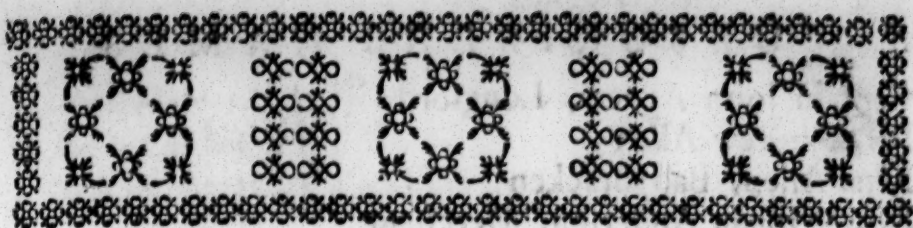
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“ undertook the collecting of the Names in dif-
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“ and Delay which must be occasioned by the
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“ ther Amendments, will be a sufficient Excuse
“ for its not appearing so compleat as was in-
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